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SKETCHES

OF

THE LAST NAVAL WAR.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

CAPTAIN E. JURIEN DE LA GRAVIÈRE,

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE BRITISH NAVY."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

THE LAST NAVAL WAR

PART IV.

NELSON AT NAPLES.

At the moment when Nelson quitted Egypt he had some years more to live, and two victories to gain; but fortune would have been more propitious to his glory had it ended his life on that memorable night which saw Dupetit Thouars and Brueys perish. Nelson would then have died with all the lustre of a stainless fame, as young Marceau fell, as Desaix was to fall, crowned with that halo which only encircles the brows of unspotted honour. "My great and excellent son," wrote his father, "began the world without fortune, but with a good and religious heart. . . . The Lord has shielded him in the day of

battle, and has heard the prayers he offered that he might be one day useful to his country. . . . He is now the glory of my grey hairs, and at forty years of age, as simple, as generous, as good as ever. He is without fear, because he is without cause for remorse." Those who in this portrait recognise the open and animated countenance of the intrepid Admiral whose flag was flying in the Vanguard, will not discover in it a faithful resemblance to Lady Hamilton's adulterous lover, and the murderer of Caraccioli.*

* Those readers who have been interested by the honourable feeling and chivalrous spirit which pervade the French author's pages, will regret that he should have spoken so harshly of Nelson. At the same time, we have no right to expect from a Frenchman that forbearance which gratitude imposes upon ourselves, when touching upon this deplorable stain on Nelson's honour. Attempts have been made to justify Caraccioli's execution upon certain admitted principles of military law; and precedents have been adduced to show that superior authority may annul a capitulation *after it has been carried into effect*, upon the ground that the officer granting the terms exceeded his powers. The French generals St. Cyr and Rapp had each capitulated on terms, in 1813; the former had *marched out* with his whole force of 27,000 men. When Prince Schwartzenberg annulled the capitulation signed by General Klenau, St. Cyr was offered a safe conduct to the place where he had capitulated (Dresden); but he preferred accepting the *annulled* conditions imposed, and became prisoner of war. It is very conceivable, therefore, that Nelson thought himself justified in annulling the capitulation of the Neapolitan forts, especially when advised thereto by the experienced diplomatist (Sir William Hamilton), whom he naturally appealed to. Nevertheless, that Nelson was *morally* wrong here, our own feelings, in these calmer and more impartial days, compel us to admit, and that he was *legally* wrong we learn from the high authority of

It was in 1793, when sent by Lord Hood to request the troops, promised by Ferdinand IV., for the defence of Toulon, that Nelson first made acquaintance with those unworthy friends, who were destined to exercise so sad an influence over his future fate. But at that time Sir William Hamilton was no more to the captain of the Agamemnon than a zealous diplomatic agent, nor was Lady Hamilton more than a young and pleasing woman, whose graceful and distinguished manner had attracted him. Moreover, Nelson passed but a few days at Naples on this occasion, and did not return there until after the victory of Aboukir.

that eminent jurist, Sir James Mackintosh, who says, "I read over the passage which respects them" (Nelson's proceedings at Naples) "three or four times, in hopes of discovering a vindication; but alas! it is impossible." It only remains for us then to deplore what we cannot justify, and to allow due weight to the circumstances which must have unhappily biassed Nelson's impressible and naturally credulous mind. To him there was no such thing as *revolution* in 1799. There was *rebellion*, and those concerned therein were rebels, who, in his view, deserved as little quarter as pirates, while the Neapolitan rebellion, as effected under French bayonets, was doubly obnoxious to his anti-revolutionary and loyal feelings. Caraccioli, again, was more than an ordinary rebel; he was a deserter from his king's service ere he became a traitor in arms against him, and as such we must confess our slight sympathy for the man himself, while we regret Nelson's share in his death. Yet all this would never have so far perverted a mind naturally generous and humane had not, as Mackintosh says, "an accursed suggestion" placed Sir William and Lady Hamilton at his elbow.—*Translator's note.*

Sir William, who was foster-brother of George III., had been for thirty years British minister to the court of the Two Sicilies, and was in high favour at Naples. He was fond of shooting, a passport to King Ferdinand's good graces, and passed for a lover of the fine arts (though suspected of somewhat mercenary motives), a title to the favor of the queen. Nevertheless, while enjoying the intimacy of these two sovereigns, and honoured by their confidence, Sir William Hamilton did not scruple to amuse himself at their expense. He was a facetious and jovial old man, very free spoken, and unshackled by received opinions; in short, an English epicurean, whose inexhaustible wit Nelson declared would have sufficed to restore Lord St. Vincent's health and spirits had he come to Naples for his health, in 1799, instead of going to England. The English, for the most part, do not indulge in light jesting; it sits awkwardly on their phlegmatic temperaments to trifle with vice, and to ridicule decency and propriety. "The good Sir William," as Nelson called him, was, therefore, one of those coarse and sceptical minds rarely met with in that nation, accustomed to respect the sanctity of domestic virtue. Such characters as Sir William, with the stiffness inseparable from the national temperament, have

something more repulsive about them than similar natures among a people more frivolous and less reserved.

At sixty years of age, Sir William, falling suddenly in love, married the mistress of his nephew. This mistress, known in London as Emma Harte, was, according to contemporary testimony, and the portrait of her by the celebrated painter, Rômney, one of the most fascinating women of her time. But born the daughter of a poor servant girl in Wales, whom, in the days of her greatness, she chose to call Mrs. Cadogan, Emma Harte had passed her youth in the most singular and equivocal adventures. All these circumstances, though perfectly known to Sir William, did not prevent his marrying her, nor did he show himself more particular as to the future than the past. Gifted in the highest degree with all the qualifications of a complaisant husband, he lived for five years with his wife and Nelson without taking any umbrage at the intimacy between them, calling Nelson all the time his "best friend" and the "most worthy man in the world." On his death-bed, as a last trait of humour, he bequeathed his wife to the care of this excellent friend, and the greater part of his fortune to his nephew. As for Lady Hamilton, with that wonderful versa-

tility which only belongs to women, she soon raised herself to the level of her new position. Having been presented at the court of Naples, she succeeded in gaining the queen's confidence, and in that high sphere to which fortune had raised her, no sudden embarrassment seems to have ever betrayed the baseness of her origin, or the disgrace of her past life.

The court of Naples, where prudish England had then such strange representatives, was the court of vacillation and perfidy. The king and queen were quite agreed in hating France; but the king's hatred was timid and indolent, the queen's active and energetic, while the state policy vibrated between these two influences; obeying one day the fears of a Spanish Bourbon, and the next the passions of an Austrian archduchess. A foreigner, the favourite of both sovereigns, directed affairs in this tortuous path—the Chevalier Acton, who for more than twenty years governed the country and played the part of Godoy. He was born at Besançon, in 1738, the son of an Irish physician, and after some years spent in an adventurous life, he was called to Naples, in 1779, and obtained, successively, through the queen's favour, the ministry of marine, of war, and of foreign affairs, which last he still retained in 1798. Entirely devoted to the

English alliance, and bound to Sir W. Hamilton by private friendship, this favourite, during his long reign, was the servile instrument of the British Cabinet.

Since 1776, the queen, owing to the birth of a son, and in conformity with the marriage treaty, had obtained a seat and voice in the council. Sister to the queen of France, and a younger daughter of the Emperor Francis I. and Maria Theresa, Maria Carolina was then twenty-five years old. She was handsome, lively, intelligent, fond of reforms, and captivated by the applause which at that period was bestowed upon the philanthropic princes of the house of Austria. The world praised her energy, her learning, her enlightened taste for the arts, and her generous views, and as yet only whispered her gallantries. All therefore encouraged the hope, that the Neapolitans would not have reason to regret her influence over the indolent son of Charles III. How many reigns condemned by posterity commenced under such favourable auspices! If called to govern a great nation, Maria Carolina might perhaps have ranked with Catherine II.: her glory might then have ennobled her foibles: in more tranquil times the happiness of Naples might have made the people pardon them, but the fatality which threw her

upon a stage too narrow for her activity, and in times of agitation and difficulty, delivered her over to the severity of history. The French Revolution soon changed the liberal tendencies of the queen's mind into a profound abhorrence of those principles, which, after having subverted the throne of Louis XVI., had dared to bring Marie Antoinette to the scaffold. Anxious to stifle sedition in its birth, the queen gave her ear to Acton. "The people are faithful and devoted," she used to repeat after him, "but the nobles are infamous Jacobins." Such were the suspicions that filled the dungeons of Naples with the highest nobles of the kingdom, but never — the queen's worst enemies have done her this justice — would she have sanctioned the atrocities of her ministers, but for the veil with which they concealed them. The generous instincts of the race of Maria Theresa were only overpowered by reasons of state and political sophistry.

The king, early abandoned to a negligent guardianship, grafted vulgar habits on low tastes, which did not make him popular. He rarely took part in affairs of state, unless impelled to do so by some secret terror. In 1796, frightened by the progress of Bonaparte, who had just dispersed the army of Wurmser, he awoke

from his apathy to treat with the French republic, and had sent the Prince Belmonte Pignatelli to Paris, against the strong remonstrances of the queen. The danger once past, he fell back into his indifference, and had not energy to oppose the fresh acts of imprudence which were to endanger his crown and hasten the ruin of his kingdom.

Such were the personages who surrounded the hero of the Nile at Naples. On the 17th May, 1798, the very day that the army of Egypt quitted Toulon, a treaty, signed at Vienna by the minister, Thugut, on the part of Austria, and the Duke de Campo Chiaro on the part of Naples, regulated the contingents which the Emperor, Francis II., and King Ferdinand, engaged to furnish on the resumption of hostilities against France. Some months later, Paul I., of Russia, and the Ottoman Porte entered into this alliance, and England sent a fleet under Nelson to Naples. The queen now thought the moment come to declare herself.

"The brave and gallant Admiral Nelson," she wrote to the Marquis de Circello, "has gained a complete victory over the regicide fleet. . . . . Italy has now nothing to fear from the side of the sea, and it is England who has saved her. . . . The announcement of this glorious day has pro-

duced an enthusiasm at Naples which cannot be described; you would have been affected to see my children throwing themselves into my arms, crying with joy at the happy news, doubly joyful at that critical moment. Fear, avarice, and the pernicious intrigues of the republicans had caused the disappearance of all coin, and there was no one with sufficient courage to propose the measures necessary to restore it to circulation. . . . . Many people who thought a crisis at hand began already to throw off the mask, but on learning the destruction of Bonaparte's fleet, they became more cautious. Let the emperor now display a little activity, and we may hope for the deliverance of Italy. As for us, we are ready to show ourselves worthy of the friendship and alliance of the intrepid defenders of the sea."

It was in the midst of all this exultation that Nelson arrived at Naples, in the Vanguard, on the 22d September. He was immediately surrounded, congratulated, and embraced. The king himself went to visit him, and the queen wrote, "Believe me, my valiant and glorious Admiral, that my grateful esteem for you will accompany me to the tomb." Lady Hamilton, whom the calculations of ambition, and, perhaps, also the attractions of glory, already induced to

lavish her pernicious flattery on Nelson, having gone off to the Vanguard before she anchored even, could not restrain her emotions. She rushed on deck, and threw herself fainting into the Admiral's arms. The king called him his saviour; the court proclaimed him the liberator of Italy; the populace, which rushed to the landing-place at the moment his barge entered the port, saluted him by the same titles, and echoed the same enthusiastic cries. This was too severe a trial for that frank and ardent nature; for that man of guileless and impassioned character, who, having seen less of the world than of ships, presented himself without any safeguard against the seductions of grandeur, of flattery, and of love. The conqueror of the Nile, the husband of Dr. Nisbett's amiable widow, who had at first looked with profound disgust on the baseness of Italian corruption, and who had called Naples "a country of rogues, w——s, and fiddlers," was soon completely enslaved by Lady Hamilton's charms. Lady Hamilton made him over to the queen, and placed the British fleet at the command of the court of Naples, and all its evil passions.

Nelson's correspondence soon showed the absurd excesses into which his sudden passion betrayed him. "I am writing opposite Lady

Hamilton," he wrote to Lord St. Vincent, "and were your lordship in my place, I doubt if you could write any better; there is so much about her to turn one's head and make one's hand tremble." The longer he stayed at Naples the more firmly the yoke was fixed; the poison sucked into his veins showed itself in a thousand extravagances. He soon could not finish a letter without introducing Lady Hamilton's name. Lord St. Vincent, Earl Spencer, the ex-viceroy of Corsica, Lord Minto, the Emperor Paul I., who at his request had given Lady Hamilton the order of St. John of Jerusalem, his own wife even — that irreproachable and devoted companion of his youth, that tried friend of his humble fortunes — were made the confidants of his mad infatuation. "Where should I be," he used to exclaim, "without the good Sir William; the incomparable Lady Hamilton! . . . It was their care which restored my health. . . . They are both as estimable for their hearts as for their heads. . . . If they approve my conduct I despise the whole world's envy! . . . I would do nothing without consulting them; . . . for my glory is dearer to them than to myself. . . . We three are only one." "*Tria juncta in uno.*" It is thus that he, himself, and Sir William Hamilton designated their strange alliance.

The widow of Dr. Nisbett had had a son by her first marriage, who entered the navy under Nelson, and had rapidly passed through its lower ranks. Already a lieutenant at Teneriffe, young Nisbett had accompanied Nelson in that expedition, and had received him in his arms when he fell wounded into his boat at the moment of landing. He tied his handkerchief tightly round the wounded arm, to stop the blood which ran freely from it, and it was probably by those means that life was preserved. Nelson loved the young man from his childhood, and this event had increased their mutual attachment. The tie was now sacrificed to a fatal passion. Young Josiah Nisbett, who then commanded the Thetis frigate, could not dissemble his grief at the daily increasing influence which a shameless woman exercised over his stepfather. At first he was annoying; he soon became hateful. A fortuitous circumstance, an affront which Lady Hamilton received, excited the Admiral's fury. Captain Nisbett was ordered to quit the squadron, and Nelson seemed to separate without regret from the young man who had so long fought at his side, and to whom, until that time, he had shown the tenderness of a father.

But what affection in his case could have resisted the all-powerful charms which captivated

his senses, and fascinated his eyes? "Lady Hamilton is an angel," he wrote to Lord St. Vincent, who, as a sexagenarian, might well be astonished at this confidence, "and I place all my trust in her; be assured, my dear lord, that she fully deserves it." Lady Hamilton had, in fact, become the mouthpiece of his impatient policy at the court of Naples. It was to her he addressed his complaints, and confided his most secret cares; it was no longer Sir William that he commissioned to lay them at the foot of the throne. We give here the manifesto he drew up on this occasion. Already Nelson's style is changed. To the simplicity of his first despatches there succeeds a verbose energy, which recalls the proclamations of Ferdinand IV.

"My dear Madam (he wrote to Lady Hamilton, 3d Oct., 1798), the anxiety which you and Sir William Hamilton have always felt for the happiness of their Sicilian Majesties was also planted in me five years past, and I can truly say, that on all the occasions that have offered (which have been numerous) I have never failed to manifest my sincere regard for the felicity of these kingdoms. Under this attachment, I cannot be an indifferent spectator to what has been and is passing in the two Sicilies, nor to the misery which (without being a politician) I cannot

but see plainly is ready to fall on those kingdoms, now so loyal, by the worst of all policy — that of procrastination. Since my arrival in these seas in June last, I have seen in the Sicilians the most loyal people to their sovereign, with the utmost detestation of the French and their principles. Since my arrival at Naples I have found all ranks, from the very highest to the lowest, eager for war with the French, who, as we all know, are preparing an army of robbers to plunder these kingdoms and destroy the monarchy. I have seen the minister of the insolent French pass over in silence the manifest breach of the third article of the treaty between his Sicilian Majesty and the French Republic.* Ought not this extraordinary conduct to be seriously noticed? Has not the uniform conduct of the French been to lull governments into a false security, and then to destroy them? As I have before stated, is it not known to every person that Naples is the next marked object for plunder? With this knowledge, and that his Sicilian Majesty has an army ready (I am told) to march into a country anxious to receive them, with the advantage of carrying the war from,

* An article which interdicted the king of Naples from admitting more than four English ships of war at a time into the Bay of Naples.

instead of waiting for it at home, I am all astonished that the army has not marched a month since . . . But should, unfortunately, this miserable, ruinous system of procrastination be persisted in, I would recommend that all your property and persons should be ready to embark at a very short notice. It will be my duty to look to and provide for your safety, and with it (I am sorry to think it will be necessary) that of the amiable queen of these kingdoms and her family. I have read with admiration her dignified and incomparable letter of Sept. 1796. May the councils of these kingdoms ever be guided by such sentiments of dignity, honour, and justice; and may the words of the great William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, be instilled into the ministry of this country, '*The boldest measures are the safest*,' is the sincere wish of your Ladyship's, &c.,

"HORATIO NELSON."

It was thus that Nelson hoped to save the Neapolitan kingdom. He was a man to stake a kingdom as resolutely as a fleet, and he found, unfortunately, in the queen a fatal inclination to this hazardous policy. According to his advice a force should have been pushed suddenly into the Papal states to surprise the French battalions scattered through them, and war should have been commenced before it was declared.

Such was the counsel which, through Lady Hamilton, he often gave utterance to at the court of Naples; and some Roman emigrants joined their own exhortations, and promised the co-operation of a fanatical populace with the invading army. Of all the ministers, Acton alone seconded this imprudent advice in council. The Marquis de Gallo and the Prince of Belmonte Pignatelli, more wise and better informed on the state of Europe, opposed the suggestion with all their power. Nelson could not forgive this honest resistance. "I detest that Marquis de Gallo," he wrote to Earl Spencer, "he is ignorant of the common forms of civility. Sir William Hamilton has just discovered that a messenger leaves for London in an hour, and yet I spent part of yesterday evening with the minister without his telling me a single word about it. He is always admiring his orders, his rings, and his snuff-box. In truth, when they made him a minister they spoiled a perfect *petit-maître*."

Two weighty considerations, however, opposed the opening of a campaign by the Neapolitan troops. There was no money to pay them, and no general to place at their head. A general had been demanded from Austria, and money from that inexhaustible source of subsidies, England. "I told the Queen," wrote Nelson to Lord

Spencer, "that I thought Mr. Pitt could hardly ask the country to make fresh sacrifices at this moment; but that certainly, if England saw this country making courageous exertions to avoid the destruction with which it is menaced by France, John Bull will not be backward, nor leave his friends in the lurch." With this assurance, and the arrival of General Mack, the last scruples of the court seemed to vanish. Mack, for whom such singular failures were in reserve, and who, after having ruined a kingdom in fifteen days, was, at a later period, to capitulate with a whole army, at this time passed for one of the best generals in Europe. He was received at Naples as the tutelary genius of the two Sicilies, and may be described as cold, grave, frugal of speech, and letting out each word by itself in oracular form. He promised to crush the French army, and they took him at his word.

Naples, then, was to have the honour of opening this new campaign. Piedmont, stirred up to second the movement, was to rise in insurrection in the rear of the French army, and a body of troops, transported to Leghorn in English ships, was to cut off their retreat. All was prepared to surround and destroy the French detachment scattered through the Papal states and

Upper Italy. The Emperor, however, did not make any movement as yet. Whether he thought the season too late, or that he awaited the Russians, who had not then arrived, the Austrian government had resolved to temporise, and to prolong the negotiations until the spring. This resolution nearly destroyed the ardour of the Neapolitan government.

On Nov. 13th, 1798, Nelson wrote to Lord Spencer from the camp of San Germano, where the Court then was:—"His Majesty sent for me yesterday to concert the commencement of hostilities with General Mack and Acton. 30,000 men, forming, as Mack says, the finest army in Europe, defiled before me yesterday, and, as far as I am a judge of such matters, it would be hard to see finer troops. In the evening we had a council of war, when it was agreed that 4000 infantry and 600 cavalry should take possession of Leghorn. I was to embark the infantry in the Vanguard, Culloden, Minotaur, and two Portuguese ships. A Neapolitan ship was to escort the cavalry, embarked in merchant ships. This plan had received the approbation of his Majesty, and Mack was to march on Rome with, I do not hesitate to say, 30,000 of the finest troops in Europe..... Thus matters stood when I retired. This morning at

six I attended to take leave of their Majesties, but I found them much dispirited. The courier who left London (Vienna?) on the 4th of this month has brought no assurance of support from the Emperor. M. Thugut only answers evasively, and wishes that the French should be the aggressors; as though it were not an aggression to assemble an army, as the court knows, and all the world may know, has been done, to invade Naples and revolutionise the country in a week! As no one is ignorant of this design, assuredly it is an aggression, and a most serious one. The Emperor's forces are not in the habit of recovering kingdoms from the enemy, and it is easier to destroy than to restore. I ventured, therefore, to tell their Majesties that the King had but two alternatives; — to march onwards with the aid of God and a good cause, and die, if need were, sword in hand, or to remain here until the enemy came to kick him out of his kingdom. The King answered that he relied on God, and would not recede. At the same time he begged me to stay here until noon, that he might consult Mack on the new turn of affairs."

After long hesitation, the original plan was adopted. On Nov. 28th, Nelson landed 5000 men at Leghorn, under command of General Naselli, who advanced towards Rome and the

Abruzzi, in five columns by five parallel roads. On the side of the Abruzzi the Chevalier Micheroux and Colonel San Filippo first met the French troops, and left on the field of battle a number of killed, many prisoners, and all their artillery and baggage. "The right wing of the Neapolitan army has been repulsed," said Nelson, "not to say worse, but Mack and Ferdinand IV. have entered Rome." Championnet, informed in good time, had evacuated that city and concentrated his forces on the Tiber, between Civita-Castellana and Civita-Ducale. The confidence of the court of Naples began to fail, and Nelson himself, who had confirmed them in their imprudent plans, in some degree, shared their fears.

On the 6th of December, 1798, he wrote to Earl St. Vincent: "In a few words, this is the state of affairs. The army is at Rome; Civita Vecchia is occupied; but the French have still 500 men in the Castle of St. Angelo. They have also 13,000 in a strong position at Castellana. General Mack is marching against them with 20,000 men. I think the result of the battle doubtful, and on it depends the safety of Naples. If Mack is beaten, this country is lost in a fortnight, for the Emperor has not moved his army, and unless he does, Naples is in no

state to resist the French; but there is no choice." It was necessity which constrained the King of Naples to assume the offensive, instead waiting until the French had assembled a sufficient force to drive him from his kingdom.

Nelson's fears were soon realised. "The finest army in Europe" vanished at the sound of the first cannon. Beaten on the banks of the Tiber, Mack did not attempt to retard the enemy's progress; he thought himself surrounded by traitors, and still more prompt in his retreat than his inconsiderate advance on Rome, he passed Velletri, where Charles III. beat the Imperialists in 1744; Gaeta, which Marshal Tschiudy gave up to Macdonald without fighting; the Garigliano, whose swelled waters would have covered his troops, and only stopped at seven leagues from Naples on the line of the Volturno, and under the walls of Capua! In this precipitate flight, 7000 soldiers were left behind. They were Neapolitans, like those so disgracefully beaten at Fermo, Castellana, and Terni; but they had a brave man at their head, the French emigrant, Comte Roger de Damas, and though pursued by the troops under Championnet, and cut off by those of Kellermann, they forced their way through the Tuscan states and embarked at Orbitello. Meanwhile, the terror

of the court was at its height. On the 11th of December, Ferdinand IV. reached Caserta, closely followed by the French troops, and for three days, neither the English ambassador nor Nelson could gain admittance to the Queen; but the letters she addressed to Lady Hamilton betrayed, as Nelson wrote to Lord Spencer, the anguish of her soul. "The Neapolitan officers," he said, "have lost little honour, for God knows they had little to lose, but they have lost all they had." . . . Mack has vainly prayed the King to have these fugitives sabred. He even, it is said, tore the epaulettes off some of those miserable wretches himself to give them to some deserving sergeants. . . . So much treason and cowardice have at last broken the spirit of this great Queen. She no longer knows who to trust.

The court, in fact, thought itself unsafe at Naples, and meditated a refuge in Sicily. The 15th of December, Nelson anchored his flagship out of gunshot from the forts, and recalled Captain Troubridge, who was detached with two ships to the coast of Tuscany. "The King has returned," he wrote, "and all is as bad as it can be. For God sake hasten back, and do not approach this bay without taking precautions. It is probably at Messina you will find me; but you will learn on passing the Lipari Islands, whether

we are not at Palermo." The frigate Alcmena, and three Portuguese line-of-battle ships, joined Nelson at this critical time, and the flight of the court was prepared with the utmost secrecy. Each night Lady Hamilton herself superintended the clandestine removal of the crown jewels and plate by a subterraneous passage which led from the palace to the shore. The most precious antiquities, the chefs-d'œuvres of the museum, the furniture of the palaces, the specie and ingots still left in the bank and the mint, were conveyed by the English boats to the Vanguard. They still show in the Museum of Naples a gold ring found at Pompeii, which King Charles III. left at Naples on going to Spain. "I cannot carry away," he said, "the property of the state." His son did not follow the generous example, for he did not leave his capital without taking to the English squadron property valued by Nelson at more than 60 millions of francs.

When these treasures were embarked, the great difficulty still remained. It was necessary to convey the royal family away through a suspicious people, ready to resort to violence to retain them. Thus the report of their intended departure had scarcely been spread through Naples, when crowds of people, actuated by various motives, carrying arms and flags, rushed

to the square of the palace. A cabinet courier, arrested on the mole at the moment he was embarking to go to the Vanguard, was the first victim of this effervescence. He fell pierced with poniards, and his body was dragged by the feet under the palace windows. Ferdinand IV. then appeared on a balcony, and persuaded them to disperse, promising them that he would not quit Naples; but the same evening, Nelson landed secretly at the arsenal, the boats of the squadron approaching the quays, and being prepared to use force if necessary. The boats' crews had no fire-arms, for it would have been necessary to act without noise had a collision become inevitable. The large boats with their guns in, assembled round the Vanguard: the Alcmena only awaited the signal to cut her cables and make sail. At half past eight, on a dark and stormy night, the royal family, under the escort of Nelson, escaped furtively from the palace, proceeded towards the mole, and at half past nine was safe under the British flag. Next morning a decree affixed to the walls announced to the frightened people, that the King had appointed Prince Francisco Pignatelli lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and that his Majesty was proceeding to Sicily, intending to return to Naples with powerful succours.

A contrary wind kept the Vanguard for two days at her anchorage. On December 25. she sailed, followed by the Neapolitan line-of-battle ship Samnita, and a score of transports. Next morning a violent gale, "the heaviest he had ever known," Nelson wrote to Earl St. Vincent, assailed the fugitive squadron, and the youngest of the Neapolitan princes, seized with a sudden and unexampled illness, died in Lady Hamilton's arms. Some hours later, the Vanguard was in sight of Palermo; but this last blow had overwhelmed the Queen. She wished to escape from the transports of joy with which the royal family was received in Sicily, and leaving the King to receive this homage, she landed some hours before him, reached the palace secretly on December 26., and there indulged her sorrow and her desires for revenge.

Such was the deplorable issue of that singular recourse to arms. On all sides, at Vienna, St. Petersburg, Florence, in London even, they blamed the imprudence of the Court of Naples, and a share of blame fell upon the advocates of this sudden rupture. "I never thought," Nelson wrote at this time, "the Neapolitans a race of warriors; but could I foresee that a kingdom defended by 50,000 troops, all young and fine looking, should be overrun by 12,000 men with-

out this conquest being preceded by anything that can be called battle?" One might have foreseen, however, without being a prophet, that new levies would hardly stand before the veteran bands of the French republic. The favourite manœuvre of Nelson, an imposing concentration of force upon the enemy's weak points, might have balanced this inferiority; but Mack, on the contrary, scattered his troops in detachments, which were beaten successively. Nevertheless, neither the faults of Mack nor the inexperience of his army, would have caused this rapid invasion of the kingdom had not the counsels of Acton and the English, and his own fears, sent the King to Sicily. That which was most lamentable in this campaign was not a first reverse, which might have been repaired, but the sudden despair which, instantly declaring that all was lost, suggested this shameful flight, preceded by pillage, followed by anarchy, and which the English, who advised it, were afterwards to make yet more hateful.

"I did not forget at this important time," wrote Nelson to Earl St. Vincent, "that it was my duty not to leave ships of the line, which might fall into the enemy's hands. I prepared to burn them before my departure, but their majesties' desire induced me to defer it to the

last moment. I therefore requested the Marquis de Niza to make the Neapolitan squadron anchor outside of him, and to send the ships he could fit with jury-masts to Messina. I ordered him at the same time, should the French approach Naples and the people revolt against the legitimate government, to destroy all the Neapolitan ships immediately, and to join me at Palermo." Some days after the departure of the royal family three ships of the line, one frigate, and seven corvettes were burned, and in less than an hour the Neapolitan navy had ceased to exist. Nelson, in answer to the complaints of the Court, said that his orders had been misunderstood, and he loudly blamed the Portuguese officer, Commodore Campbell, who had executed them*, for disobeying his instructions in burning the ships at the moment when the Neapolitan troops had gained some advantages. He even showed himself inclined to try this officer by a court-martial, but the "good and amiable Queen" was pleased to intervene in this disagreeable affair, and the accused was received into favour on account, as Nelson said, "of his good intentions."

* Nelson's instructions were to burn the ships "in case of either the French troops entering Naples, or an insurrection of the people against its legitimate government." Letter to the Marquis de Niza, Dec. 22. 1798. He therefore had a clear right to say his orders were misunderstood, as neither case had occurred.—*Translator's note.*

While the events above recited occurred at Naples, the victory of the Nile produced its fruits elsewhere, and the sad consequences of French weakness by sea began to be felt. In the beginning of October the Maltese insurgents had received 1200 muskets and ammunition from the British squadron. Ten Russian ships and thirty Turkish assembled at the Dardanelles, steered for the Ionian Islands, and an English expedition from Gibraltar sailed for Minorca. A month later Corfu was invested by 8000 Turks; the French at Malta were besieged by 10,000 Maltese, blockaded by three English ships of the line, and shut up in the fortifications of Valetta; Minorca yielded to the united efforts of Commodore Duckworth and General Stewart. All those advanced posts, which guard the outlets of the Mediterranean, and which a provident policy, already looking to the East, had put into the hands of France, or secured her influence over, were thus on the eve of falling into the enemy's power. The interest, however, felt in these important possessions was effaced by a deeper regret. The army of Egypt seemed for ever lost to France; for it was not the two Venetian ships of the line and eight frigates blockaded at Alexandria by the squadron of Captain Wood, nor the Guillaume Tell at Malta,

and Généreux at Ancona that could force a passage through the British squadron for an army. The united fleets of France and Spain would hardly have justified the attempt.

Far from slumbering in false security after the battle of the Nile, the British government redoubled its activity. The ships which had fought in that battle had been repaired at Naples or Gibraltar, and at the beginning of 1799 England reckoned 105 ships of the line at sea, and 469 smaller cruisers. These 105 ships were almost all employed in the European seas, and ready to support each other at the first alarm. Admiral Duncan, with sixteen British ships of the line and ten Russian, kept the Baltic clear for convoys, and blockaded the remains of the Dutch squadron in the Texel. Lord Bridport cruised off Brest, and Lord Keith relieved Lord St. Vincent (who was obliged to go to Gibraltar for his health) off Cadiz. The enemy was therefore in force at all points, and never did our maritime position appear so hopeless.

On the continent the French republic still triumphed. In three days Piedmont had been occupied by our troops, and on the 10th January, 1799, a truce, demanded by the Prince Pignatelli, delivered up Capua to the army of Championnet. On the 22d of that month that

army was at the gates of Naples, where an enraged populace had kept the inhabitants in a state of terror since the King's departure. Prince Pignatelli had taken flight after the armistice, General Mack had taken refuge in the French camp, and the chiefs elected by the people were unable to restrain or appease them. Championnet arrived at Naples most opportunely to save the town from the fury of the people, and having taken it after an obstinate resistance of two days, set about restoring order and security. His prudent regulations calmed down the effervescence of the multitude, and the government he established, under the name of the Parthenopean Republic, was recognised by the majority of towns in the Abruzzi and Calabria.

Disconcerted by the rapidity of this conquest, and thinking that the royal family would be long exiled from their kingdom, Nelson turned his thoughts to the means of pressing the siege of Malta, which the pretensions recently put forward by Russia to that island made a duty. Paul I. had accepted the title of Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, lately held by the Baron Hompesch; and the squadron which, under the orders of Admiral Ouschakoff, cruised in the entrance of the Adriatic, only awaited the fall of Corfu to steer for Sicily.

Nelson, who, to his great disgust, found the Russians less docile than the Portuguese, would have preferred seeing them at this time on the coast of Egypt. "Those fellows," he wrote in his anger, "seem to me to be thinking more of securing ports for themselves in the Mediterranean than destroying Bonaparte's army. If ever they establish themselves at Corfu, the Porte will have a sore thorn in its foot there. How can the worthy Turk be blind to this danger?" He was obliged, however, to put up with the Russians in the Ionian Islands, where they remained until 1807, but he resolved to keep them out of Malta.

When the Emperor Charles V. ceded the government of Malta and Gozo to the knights of St. John in perpetuity, he had stipulated as the condition of this cession, that if ever through any cause or at any time the Order should abandon these islands, Malta and Gozo should revert to the sovereigns of Sicily, formerly their liege lords. Lord Nelson and Sir W. Hamilton pleaded this ancient title which Ferdinand IV. seemed in no hurry to assert, and proclaimed the King of Naples lawful sovereign of those islands then occupied by French troops. The Maltese, who had always hated the tyrannical rule of the knights, willingly consented to this arrangement,

and through their deputies acknowledged Ferdinand IV. as their sovereign. "The King of Naples," Nelson wrote to Captain Ball on the 21st of January and 28th of February, 1799, "is the legitimate sovereign of Malta, and I think his flag should be displayed on every point of the island; but it is certain that a Neapolitan garrison would sell the place to the first bidder. . . . It is therefore necessary that the island should be placed under the special protection of his Britannic Majesty during the war. For this reason the King of Naples wishes that wherever his flag is displayed the British flag should be hoisted to the right of it to mark the fact of our protectorate. . . . I am sure that the Neapolitan government will make no difficulty about ceding the sovereignty of this island to England; and I have lately, in concert with Sir W. Hamilton, claimed from his Majesty a secret engagement that he should never cede Malta to any other power without the consent of the British Government. . . . A report prevailed here that a Russian ship has gone to visit you, carrying proclamations addressed to the Maltese. I hate the Russians, and if this ship has been sent by the admiral who commands at Corfu, he is a blackguard . . . You must allow no flag in the island but the Neapolitan and the English. Should

any party wish to hoist the Russian flag, neither the King of Naples nor myself will allow any corn to go from Sicily or elsewhere to Malta."

Such was the haughty tone assumed by Nelson towards the most powerful ally of England; but other events were soon to summon his ardent and changeful mind to a new theatre. The successes of Championnet unhappily exercised but little influence over the great operations about to commence. Austria, informed of the approach of the Russians, had at last begun to move, and the new coalition already reckoned about 300,000 men under arms. The Directory was ill prepared against such a formidable combination. At the opening of the campaign the Archduke Charles drove Jourdan from the Danube back upon the Rhine, and General Cray forced Schérer from the Adige to the Mincio, and from thence to the Adda, where Suwarrow, joining with the Baron Melas, would have destroyed the French army, had not the genius of Moreau protected its retreat. The result of these early reverses was to oblige the 28,000 men, who occupied Naples and Rome, to abandon their recent conquests. Macdonald, appointed to succeed Championnet in these critical circumstances, recalled the troops which, under the orders of General Duhesme, were closely following up the

insurgent band which desolated Calabria. Garrisons were left in the fort of St. Elmo, Capua, Gaeta, and Civita Vecchia; and on the 22d of April he began to fall back on Tuscany, while Moreau fell back on the Riviera of Genoa.

The new Parthenopean Republic, therefore, found itself left to its own resources; but all the men of illustrious name or reputation in Naples were compromised to its cause. The nobles, hated by the court, the proprietors suspected by the Lazzaroni, had united to defend their lives and fortunes against an unbridled populace; a natural instinct of self-preservation had made them republicans. The executive power was confided to six directors. Ercole de Agnese, a Neapolitan for thirty years resident in France, presided over them. Dominico Cirillo, one of the most famous physicians of Europe, directed the labours of the legislative body. A former captain of artillery, Gabrielle Manthoni, was appointed minister of war and general-in-chief of the Neapolitan army. The command of Castel Nuovo was given to the Chevalier Massa, a military engineer; that of Castel Uovo to the Prince Santa-Severina. General Bassetti was placed at the head of the National Guard. Prince Caraccioli had the command of the few gunboats that then formed the whole navy of Naples.

Ettore Caraffa, the Count Nuovo, the Duke of Andria and Schipani, a Calabrian by birth, recently promoted from the rank of lieutenant to be a general, commanded the detachments with which the Neapolitan government had reinforced the troops of General Duhesme. New levies were being raised; 3000 men composed the Calabrian legion. The Duke of Rocca Romana recruited a corps of cavalry; and two experienced officers, Spano, who had grown old as a subaltern, and Wirtz, a Swiss in the King's service, took command of two regiments of infantry. Every one at this moment wished to concur in serving the state. The noblest dames received collections in the churches for the Republic; the actors only performed Alfieri's plays; and that famous woman, Eleonora Fonseca Pimentel, painter, improvisatrice and martyr, being entrusted with the editorship of the "Republican Monitor," warmed the lukewarm and the timid by her energetic appeals. The critical moment had in fact arrived, when the Parthenopean Republic was either to be consolidated or to perish. The court resigning itself to useless regrets had offered no obstacle; but the rural population and the populace of Naples had declared against the new government. Here, then, was the enemy which the young Republic had to destroy without de-

lay, under pain of succumbing before its very birth was known to Europe at large. It was, however, its origin rather than principles which were attacked. Hatred of the foreigner whose flag had been adopted had excited the savage population of the Abruzzi and Calabria to insurrection, and an instinct of disorder and brigandage prevented their population from laying down their arms.

The provinces of Naples were, at that time, kept in subjection by rich and powerful feudal nobles, whose will and caprice were executed by an armed militia, known under the name of "sbirri." The inherent vices of such feudal authority had long peopled the mountains with banditti and others, who, joining the baronial or feudal troops, formed the nucleus of the first insurrection. In the Abruzzi the peasants assembled under one of the "sbirri" of the Marquis del Vasto, who had been formerly condemned to the galleys for several murders. In the Terra de Lavoro a band of brigands obeyed the orders of an assassin, whose crimes had procured him the name of Fra Diavolo, and whom Nelson, with his habit of disfiguring names, called "the great devil." A miller, named Gaetano Mammone shared the command of the insurgents in that province with Fra Diavolo. The environs of Salerno were occupied by a force under a

bishop and an old officer of police, Gherardo Curci, surnamed Sciarpa. These, however, were but secondary movements. The most important insurrection had broken out in Calabria. The Calabrians, accustomed to a hardy and active life, easily made good soldiers, their natural intelligence, their extreme sobriety, and their constant use of fire-arms, especially adapting them to a guerilla warfare. Under the influence of religious fanaticism, they were the first to give a political organisation to the movement of the peasantry against the city. Don Reggio Rinaldi, a curate of La Scalca, a little village of Lower Calabria, had formed a party in the country, and had written to the King, informing him of the feeling of the people, and begging him to send some person of high character to Calabria, that he might confer with him. This letter reached Palermo early in February, and found the Court in the greatest despondency, only hoping for its restoration through foreign intervention. The Queen was at the time very unwell, and disgusted with public affairs, which she ceased to meddle with. As to Ferdinand IV., he only troubled himself about his dignity and the interests of his crown, as matters connected with the past. He had accepted the loss of half his kingdom with stoical resignation, and the

defeat which spread consternation around him had not for a moment affected his health or comfort. "The King," said Nelson, "thank God, is in better health than any of us; he is a philosopher. The Queen alone has suffered cruelly from all that has occurred." The proposals, therefore, of the curate of La Scalca were received at Palermo with the utmost indifference; but they had reached the ears of an enterprising man, anxious to distinguish himself, the Cardinal Ruffo, who, while every one about the Court hesitated, offered to conduct this enterprise. This man was the son of a Calabrian baron, and now near sixty years old. He had been apostolic treasurer to Pope Pius VI., and had so scandalised Rome by his amours and prodigality, that the Pope, to get rid of him, had made him a cardinal. Acton, fearing his restless and active spirit, had named him vicar-general of the kingdom, hoping that the King would ruin him by entrusting this Calabrian expedition to his guidance. In the end of February Ruffo left Messina, and landed at Scylla, with which place he had established communications. He was without money or soldiers; for the Curate Rinaldi's band had not joined him; but the little town of Scylla furnished him a guard of 300 men, with whom he advanced to Bagnara, formerly a pos-

session of his family. Deserters, criminals escaped from prison, and soldiers imprudently discharged by the republicans, soon swelled his band; and the fortified town of Monteleone being laid under contribution supplied the means of extending his operations. Distributing ducats with one hand (as Nelson wrote) and blessings with the other, he made rapid progress, and was soon master of Lower Calabria. The clergy of Calabria, the most ignorant and fanatical in Europe, joined him in preaching this new crusade; and the curates, marching at the head of the young men of their parish, arrived in crowds at Mileto, where he had established his head quarters. With these reinforcements he took and sacked Cotrona, forced Cotanzaro to submit, and, returning to the road leading to Naples, advanced boldly to the walls of Cosenza.

The King, notwithstanding the news of this success, only placed his hopes in the assistance of his allies, and uneasy about the safety of Sicily even, would not allow Nelson to quit Palermo. At the Admiral's request, General Stewart had come with 2000 men from Minorca, and thus passed three months, without the British squadron attempting anything against Naples. In the month of March, when all Calabria was in insurrection, Nelson, who always shared the

impressions of the Court, did not think Sicily safe. "We are quiet for the present," he wrote to Lord Spencer; "but who can say how long we shall be so?" The approach of the French might change everything; I shall never consider Naples, nor Sicily itself, safe, until I learn that the Austrians have entered Italy." Corfu, however, having capitulated on the 3d March, 1799, it was proposed to ask the admirals, who commanded the forces of Russia and Turkey employed in the siege for some troops, and the Chevalier Micheroux was sent as envoy on that mission. In the beginning of April, four or five hundred Russians landing at Manfredonia joined the insurgent bands of Apulia, and manœuvred to unite with the Cardinal's division. The latter had just taken Cosenza, and the retreat of the French troops increased his audacity. His army was, moreover, strengthened by the succours lately sent him from Sicily, as well as those brought by Fra Diavolo and Sciarpa from the neighbourhood of Salerno. He had also field artillery in abundance, and ammunition, which the strong places he attacked were in want of. After some days' siege he took Altamura by assault, and pillaged it; he took Foggia, Ariano, Avellino, and, supported by the auxiliaries which the Chevalier Micheroux brought, established

himself at Nola, on the reverse of Mount Vesuvius.

During the last month the new Republic had hastened to its ruin. Obliged to evacuate Apulia, the Count de Ruvo had shut himself up in the citadel of Pescara. The Duke of Rocca Romana had gone over with his cavalry to the cardinal's army. The islands of Ponza, Palmarola, Capri, Ischia, and Procida, which commanded the entrance of the bay, had returned to their obedience at the sight of four line-of-battle ships, which Nelson had placed under Troubridge's orders. Schipani had been beaten by the undisciplined band of Sciarpa; Bassetti by the troops of Mammone and Fra Diavolo; Spano by the peasants of Apulia; Manthoni by those of Calabria, under Cardinal Ruffo. Naples alone, and some fortified towns, still acknowledged the authority of the Republic. Nelson, as soon as he learned these events, prepared to conduct his fleet before Naples, but unexpected intelligence delayed his departure. Admiral Bruix, escaping the vigilance of Lord Bridport, had passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and come up the Mediterranean with twenty-five sail of the line. Lord Keith's squadron, hastening to the part where the danger was most pressing, carried all sail in chase, and on the 20th of May,

under Lord St. Vincent's command, joined Rear-Admiral Duckworth's division off Port Mahon. This movement liberated the Spanish fleet anchored in Cadiz, and Admiral Mazaredo being pressed to effect his junction with the French fleet, profited by the circumstance to sail with seventeen ships of the line, of which six were three deckers. On the same day that the English fleet of twenty sail anchored in Port Mahon, the Spanish of seventeen sail arrived at Carthagena. Unhappily, even this short voyage from Cadiz to Carthagena had sufficed to reduce the Spanish fleet to a helpless state, eleven out of seventeen ships being partly dismasted in the same gale, which the English had encountered without sustaining any loss. Bruix, to whom people assigned the project of making for Egypt to bring back Bonaparte's army, had just put to sea; and Lord St. Vincent, in worse health than ever, had resigned the fleet to Admiral Keith. That officer being joined off Cape San Sebastian by five ships of the line, detached from the Channel fleet, first thought of securing Nelson's squadron against surprise; and having sent Rear-Admiral Duckworth to him with four ships of the line, he proceeded off Toulon, in hopes of obtaining some information as to the course followed by Admiral Bruix.

This important conjuncture forced Nelson to leave the enervating luxury of Palermo; he therefore recalled Troubridge and Captain Ball, who blockaded Malta with two line-of-battle ships; and being soon after joined by Admiral Duckworth, he found himself in command of sixteen sail of the line, three of which were Portuguese. With this squadron Nelson took up his cruising ground off Maritimo in the supposed course of the French fleet. He could safely maintain that position; for events had obliged Bruix to alter his plans, since the design of proceeding to Egypt had become impracticable from the disasters of the Spanish fleet. Bruix, not being able to sail for Alexandria, resolved to provision Moreau's army, whose distress he knew, and to succour Genoa and Savona, threatened with investment by the Austro-Russian forces. On the 30th of May, he anchored at Vado, landed 1000 men whom he had brought from Brest at Savona, and proceeding immediately to Genoa, threw in an immense convoy of corn on the 5th of June. Next morning, with an activity then too rare in the French navy, he made sail to the westward, and while the English awaited him before Minorca, or on his way to Alexandria, anchored in the harbour of Carthagena.

Admiral Keith, however, had at last traced Bruix; but at the moment when there were barely thirty leagues between him and the French fleet, three successive despatches from Earl St. Vincent, then sick at Port Mahon, obliged him to return off Cape San Sebastian. Lord St. Vincent, misinformed as to Admiral Bruix's position, only thought of preventing the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, and the retrograde movement he prescribed to Admiral Keith exactly favoured that operation. By nearing Minorca, to seek the Ville de Paris of three decks, which had until then borne Lord St. Vincent's flag, Keith left the passage open to the French fleet for several days; and when he arrived off Toulon, on the 22d of June, our fleet, safe in the harbour of Carthagena had already joined the Spanish fleet. Bruix did not wish to lead the allied fleet into action. His end was attained by succouring Moreau. It only remained for him to return to the Atlantic, and to convoy the Spanish fleet to Brest as a new pledge of the lately endangered Franco-Spanish alliance, and a pacific trophy of this important expedition. Lord Keith pursued, with thirty-one sail of the line, as far as Ushant; but in spite of his efforts to regain the ground he had lost by his hesitation, the combined fleet entered Brest on the 13th of

July, 1799, without a suspicion that an enemy's force was in chase.*

Since Nelson had concentrated his force off Maritimo, and recalled Troubridge, who had restored the King's authority in Ischia and Procida to Palermo, there only remained a light squadron under Captain Foote in the Bay of Naples. The insufficiency of this force had naturally contributed to prolong the resistance of the Republicans, and to cherish the hope they indulged of assistance from Admiral Bruix; but notwithstanding the most heroic efforts the Republican troops lost ground daily, and saw their advanced posts fall one after the other. The 11th of June the fort of Vigliena was taken by the Russians and Albanians; on the 13th the Calabrians had established themselves at the Ponte Madalena; on the 19th the forts of Rovigliano and Castellamare had capitulated under the fire of the English squadron, and the small force under Schipani, detached from the army which defended Naples, had entered Portici only to be massacred there. On June the 18th the French still occupied the fort of St. Elmo; but

* The history of this cruise should satisfy those who deny the possibility of any expedition from France reaching the British shore unmolested, that their confidence is vain; and *many* similar instances to those of Bruix could be cited.—*Translator's note.*

the flag of the Parthenopean Republic only floated over two ill-fortified castles — the Castel Nuovo and Castel Uovo. The first, built by Charles of Anjou in the thirteenth century, communicates with the king's palace and the arsenal, and had often served as a refuge for the king and viceroys of Naples in civil wars and insurrections. The second, raised by the Emperor Frederic II. on a rocky point, connected with the land by a narrow causeway, was then only a heap of old buildings, among which batteries had been thrown up to protect the town on the sea-side. These last bulwarks of a short-lived liberty, surrounded on all sides, attacked by 60,000 men, and already battered in breach by the cardinal's artillery, could only, according to the courtiers at Palermo, offer a useless and desperate resistance to the Royalist troops. If the Republicans still held out, it was because they expected to be relieved by the French fleet; but if Nelson had showed himself in the Bay of Naples, the mere presence of his fleet would have extinguished this last hope, and constrained them to submit without conditions to the royal mercy.

Nelson was then entirely ruled by Lady Hamilton and the Queen. During the six months which had elapsed, since the flight of the King to Palermo, he had not ceased to vent his in-

dignation against the Jacobins. It was he who blamed the weakness of the Neapolitan government, and scolded its mercy. "All my proposals," he wrote to the Duke of Clarence from Palermo, "are received with readiness; orders are immediately given in conformity to them; but when they have to be executed it is another affair. It is enough to drive one mad. His Majesty, however, has ordered the trial of two generals for cowardice and treason, and has commanded that, if found guilty, they should be shot or hanged. If these orders are executed, I shall have some hopes of having done some good here; for I do not cease preaching to them, that to reward or punish, according to the merits of the case, is the only foundation of good government. Unhappily they have never known how to do one or the other in this country."

Surrounded by captains who loved in him the intrepid admiral and kind-hearted chief, Nelson had easily inspired them with his ardour and enthusiasm. To make an end of the French and the rebels was the watch-word of the squadron. Troubridge had been carried away by this prevailing sentiment, and had at first distinguished himself at Ischia and Procida by the excess of his zeal; but soon becoming more enlightened on the true interest of his country, he had re-

monstrated with Nelson on the odious part prepared for England in that reaction which it was easy to foresee. After having asked for an honest judge to condemn "those wretches who preached sedition at Ischia;" after having wished to get a Neapolitan general shot for some expedition or other which failed at Orbitello, the rough captain took a sudden disgust at seeing his admiral's name and his own so mixed up with these intestine hatreds. On the 7th May, 1799, he wrote to Nelson, "I have just had a long conversation with the judge sent here by the Court. He told me that his business will be finished next week, and that it is customary with his profession to seek a place of safety as soon as sentence is pronounced. He wishes to be embarked immediately, and has explained to me that he would desire it should be in a ship of war. I also learned in this interview that the priests are to be sent to Palermo to be degraded under the King's eyes, and then brought back here for execution. An English ship of war employed on such a service! At the same time our judge asked *me* for an executioner. I positively refused him. If he cannot find one here, let him get one from Palermo. I see through their plan: they want to put us forward in the business, with a view to throw all the odium

upon us." It was with such feelings that Troubridge quitted the Bay of Naples. He left there Captain Foote, with the Seahorse frigate and some small craft, and on the 17th May rejoined Nelson at Palermo, who, after sailing from thence on the 20th, had returned on the 29th. He there learned the last advantages gained by Cardinal Ruffo, and received on the 12th June, at midnight, the following letter from Lady Hamilton: — "My dear Lord — I have just passed the evening with the Queen. How unhappy she is! The people of Naples, she says, are entirely devoted to the royal cause, but nothing except Lord Nelson's fleet can restore tranquillity and submission to lawful authority in that town. The Queen beseeches you, my dear lord, supplicates, and implores you, if the thing be possible, to repair to Naples. For Heaven's sake consider it, and do what the Queen asks. We will go with you, if you will kindly receive us. Sir William is unwell, and I am far from strong; the voyage will do us good." Next morning Nelson was under weigh; but a letter from Lord Keith informed him that the French fleet was probably at that moment on the coast of Italy, and that intelligence brought him back once more to Palermo. He hastened to land the Sicilian troops which he had embarked, and pro-

ceeded to cruise off Maritimo for a few days. The 21st of June, however, he yielded to the fresh solicitations of the Court, and supposing Admiral Bruix to be sufficiently occupied by the forces assembled under Admiral Keith, he abandoned his cruising ground, took Sir William and Lady Hamilton on board the Foudroyant, 80, at that time his flag-ship, and steered for Naples Bay with eighteen sail of the line.

The revolutionists had profited by this delay, and on the night of the 18th June had surprised the Calabrians encamped on the Chiaja, spiked their cannon in one battery, blew up their ammunition waggons, and regained their quarters after spreading terror through the enemy's camp. When this news reached Palermo it produced great discouragement. "Haste to Naples," wrote the minister Acton to Nelson. "Since the republicans have heard that the French fleet is at sea they have made constant sorties against our troops; and, to tell you the truth, I think the Cardinal's position anything but agreeable." The Cardinal, probably, shared Acton's opinion as to his own situation, for the morning after the sortie he begged Captain Foote to suspend hostilities, and offered terms to the republicans which the latter hesitated a long time about accepting. On the 22d June, however, a capitulation was

signed by the commanders of the auxiliary troops in the name of Russia and the Ottoman Porte, by the Cardinal Ruffo and the Chevalier Micheroux in the name of the King of Naples, and by the commandant of the fort of St. Elmo and the Chevalier Massa in the name of France and the Parthenopean Republic, while the captain of the Seahorse put his name at the foot of the treaty of capitulation. The conditions granted to the republicans were favourable, but the desperate energy they had showed, and the presence of twenty-five French ships of the line in the Mediterranean, did not allow their enemies to be more exacting. All the persons composing the garrisons of Castel Nuovo and Castel Uovo were to march out with the honours of war, drums beating and colours flying, to embark for Toulon under a safe conduct. Until their safe arrival in France should be certified, the Archbishop of Salerno, the Chevalier Micheroux, the Compte Dillon, and the Bishop of Avellino were to remain as hostages in the fort of St. Elmo. The persons and property of the republicans were to be respected and guaranteed. Those among them who did not wish to emigrate were to have liberty to remain at Naples, without being in any way molested for their past conduct, either themselves or their families. These

conditions were to extend not only to all persons of both sexes in the two forts admitted to terms, but to all prisoners taken in the Republican ranks since the commencement of hostilities. It was on these terms that the King recovered full possession of his kingdom. The Compte de Ruvo, then in possession of the forts of Civitella and Pescara, in the Abruzzi, consented to the same terms as those granted to the castles of Naples. Nevertheless the Republicans, suspecting either the good faith or the power of the Cardinal, had demanded, before surrendering, that the signature of Captain Foote should guarantee, better still than the hostages of St. Elmo, the faithful execution of this treaty. The captain of the Seahorse engaged his own honour and that of his country; nor could he entertain any doubt as to his own powers on this occasion. "The King," wrote Nelson to Earl Spencer, May 1st, "has made known by a proclamation what Republicans would be excluded from a general amnesty; but every individual, though he were the greatest rebel, to whom Troubridge may have declared your crimes are forgiven, shall be saved by those words." Captain Foote, the successor to those powers which Troubridge held, could not, without unreasonable obstinacy,

refuse to guarantee the treaty which the lieutenant-general of the kingdom had just signed.

Already, in fact, the hostages had been exchanged, and the flag of truce was flying from the republican forts and the Seahorse frigate, when Nelson appeared at the entrance of the bay. He learned the conditions of the capitulation before anchoring, and, showing grief and surprise, declared it was an infamous truce, which he would never ratify. Captain Foote received orders to haul down the flag of truce flying at the fore-top gallant mast head of his frigate; and, on the 28th of June, Nelson informed Cardinal Ruffo of his resolution to oppose the execution of the treaty until it had the assent of the King of Naples. His resolution, fortified by the praises of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, was thenceforth inflexible. In vain did the Cardinal come to him on board the Foudroyant to defend with noble energy the sacred engagement which his sovereign had given him a right to sign, and Captain Foote had received from his commander-in-chief authority to ratify. In vain did the latter urge to Nelson that, when he guaranteed such favourable terms to the rebels, he had more reason to expect the French fleet than Nelson's in the Bay of Naples. In vain did he explain that, with such a contingency in prospect, he

could not be more exacting than the Cardinal. Nelson, while doing full justice to what he called the "good intentions" of Captain Foote, did not the less persist in maintaining that he had been the dupe of "that villain Ruffo," who was striving to create a party hostile to the views of his sovereign. On the 28th June he got rid of a troublesome monitor by sending Foote to Palermo, with orders to place his frigate at the disposal of the royal family. Nevertheless, after having, in conformity with the twenty-ninth article of the treaty, liberated some state prisoners, among whom was a brother of Cardinal Ruffo's and ten English soldiers taken at Salerno, the Republicans abandoned their last refuge. They quitted it as they had stipulated, with the honours of war, and marched out to lay down their arms on the beach; boats were in readiness in the mole, and fourteen ships were prepared to receive them. They embarked full of confidence in the faith plighted to them; aud, to the eternal disgrace of Nelson, never landed again until delivered up to the most frightful vengeance which has ever stained the steps of a throne.

Among the many persons compromised by these sad events, there was one whom forty years of faithful service, seemed peculiarly to

recommend to the royal clemency; the Prince Caraccioli, an old man of seventy, belonging to a junior branch of one of the noblest families of Naples. He had long served with distinction in the Neapolitan navy, and had commanded the Tancredi, under Admiral Hotham. Enjoying the favour of his sovereign, and great popularity, he had, in 1798, been made an admiral, and was remembered by the British officers as having brought a reinforcement of two Neapolitan seventy-fours to San Fiorenzo Bay, when the neglect of the Admiralty had made even that addition most welcome. When the royal family sought refuge at Palermo, Caraccioli followed them in his line-of-battle ship, and only quitted Sicily to return to Naples, after obtaining the king's permission; but, carried away by the force of circumstances, he allowed himself to be placed at the head of the Republican navy *,

* It is probable that Englishmen, though deploring the base and inexcusable execution of Caraccioli, and condemning it the more heartily because it was the consequence of Nelson's lamentable misconduct, will, at the same time, differ from the French writer's views as to his *peculiar* claim to mercy. Caraccioli's life should have been spared; he should have been unmolested in person and property, because he was included in the capitulation. But viewing his conduct irrespective of the treaty, there is nothing in it deserving particular sympathy. An admiral grown grey in the service of his king, he deserted his sovereign in his adversity; not because the government was overthrown by an oppressed and indignant people, but simply because French bayonets had at Naples, as elsewhere,

and with some wretched gun-boats, which he succeeded in collecting, he did not fear to attack the English frigates. Nelson at this time blamed, but without much vehemence, the folly which Caraccioli had committed in quitting his master, and seemed disposed to allow, that in his heart, the Neapolitan admiral was not a thorough Jacobin. As soon as the treaty was signed, Caraccioli, better informed than his companions as to the spirit of civil wars, escaped to the mountains. A price was put on his head: he was betrayed by his own servant, and taken on board the Foudroyant at nine in the morning on the 29th of June. Captain Hardy hastened to protect him against the violence and insult of the wretches who had arrested him, and who on the very quarter-deck of the English ship, assaulted their prisoner. The admiral was in-

subverted royalty to establish a republic, and made revolution a safe and profitable game. If he had his sovereign's permission to quit the court and return to Naples, it assuredly was not given that he should assume command of the rebel squadron. The very fact of that indulgent permission placed the prince on his parole, and the "force of circumstances" pleaded by the French author in his defence, may be fairly translated "motives of interest." The French author is mistaken in saying that Nelson did not greatly blame Caraccioli at first. The expressions referred to as proving this, were used by Nelson in a letter to Lord Spencer, at a time when he only mentioned him as a fugitive; but Nelson never could have considered an admiral who turned against his king, as other than a traitor.—*Translator's note.*

formed of this arrest, and Caraccioli given into the custody of the first lieutenant of the Foudroyant.

Nelson, at this period, was suffering from extreme nervous irritation; he felt himself under the influence of a fatal and irresistible attraction which was to destroy his domestic peace. He used frequently at this time to complain to his officers of depression, and wish for the repose of death. "You who have seen me so joyous and gay," he wrote to Lady Parker, "would scarce recognise me to-day." This state of mind is often the prelude to great faults. It appears as though under the influence of these painful feelings and internal reproaches, the human heart, filled with bitterness, allowed itself to be more easily drawn into acts of cruelty. With a precipitancy which betrayed the struggles of a conscience ill at ease, Nelson decided to have Caraccioli tried immediately. A court-martial presided over by Count Thurn, commanding the Neapolitan frigate Minerva, was ordered to assemble on board the Foudroyant, and at noon, sentence of death was passed on the unfortunate old man: neither his silver hairs nor his glorious services could save him.* As soon as sentence

* The "glorious services" of Caraccioli must be read as a mere figure of speech. They had no real existence.—*Translator's note.*

was passed, Nelson gave orders for its execution that same evening. Caraccioli was condemned to be hanged at the fore-yard-arm of the Minerva frigate. Did Nelson on this occasion, after having long declared the necessity of severe examples, obey a fanatical zeal; or, yielding to the atrocious suggestion of others, did he gratify their base hatreds and ignoble revenge? It is certain that Sir William and Lady Hamilton were at that moment on board the Foudroyant, that they were both present at the interview between Cardinal Ruffo and the admiral, acted as interpreters to Nelson, and took a warm part in the stormy conference; but even had such counsellors not been present, it is probable that Nelson's conduct would have been the same. Proclaimed throughout Europe the champion of legitimacy, he was intoxicated with his own glory. His reason was affected by such adulation, and led astray by a blind devotion. He had, moreover, always professed his admiration for that kind of courage which he called political courage, and which he held to consist in a recourse to bold and extreme measures, whenever they appeared to be called for. He gave himself the credit of knowing how to take on such occasions a prompt and energetic determination, and of being a man of a courageous mind as well as of

a brave heart. Adding to this unreflecting cast of mind an insurmountable obstinacy, he was sure not to recede from that detestable course he had once entered on, to the lasting dishonour of his name.

The unhappy Caraccioli twice entreated Lieutenant Parkinson to intercede for him with Lord Nelson, demanding a fresh trial, or at least the favour, if he must die, of being shot. "I am old," he said, "and I leave no children to lament my death. I cannot therefore be supposed very anxious about a life which in the course of nature must soon end; but the ignominious death they have sentenced me to fills me with horror. Lieutenant Parkinson obtained no answer from the Admiral to this request, though he wished to urge it, and to plead for the unhappy old man. Nelson listened to him pale and silent, and then conquering his emotion by a sudden effort — "Go, sir!" he said to the young officer sharply, "and do your duty." Reduced to a last hope, Caraccioli begged Lieutenant Parkinson to appeal to Lady Hamilton; but she had shut herself up, and only came out to witness the last moments of this old man, whose appeal to her humanity she had disregarded. The horrible execution took place as Nelson had directed on board the frigate Minerva, anchored

under the Foudroyant's guns, and Count Thurn addressed this summary report to the English Admiral, as to the person responsible for the odious deed. "Si da parte a Su' Eccelenza l' Amiraglio Lord Nelson d' essere stata eseguita la sentenza di Francesco Caraccioli nella maniera da lui ordinata." * The body of Caraccioli remained suspended at the fore-yard-arm of the Minerva until sunset, when the rope was cut, and his body, as if unworthy of sepulture, thrown into the bay. This savage act completed, Nelson preserved its memory in his journal in the course of naval occurrences as if it had been an ordinary incident: — "Saturday, 29th of June, light breeze, cloudy weather; anchored the Portuguese line-of-battle ship Rainha and brig Balloon; assembled a court-martial; tried, condemned, and executed Francesco Caraccioli on board the Minerva."

What singular perversion of mind steeled that troubled breast, or through what false medium could Nelson view this barbarous execution as a regular act of military discipline! Who had commissioned him to execute the vengeance of the Neapolitan Court, or had authorised him to ex-

* "His Excellency Admiral Lord Nelson is informed that the sentence on Francis Caraccioli has been executed in the manner he directed."

clude the old man from the royal mercy which might perhaps have spared him? Why this sad precipitation, this useless murder? The massacres of which Naples was soon the theatre excited the general reprobation of Europe; but this shocking episode threw a still darker shade over Nelson's share in those horrors. Fox was the first to denounce these crimes of the legitimists in parliament, feeling that as they originated in an unparalleled act of bad faith, they reflected dishonour on the British flag even. Nelson, seeing the drift of this attack, wished to justify himself, but his friends wisely suppressed his defence. "The rebels," he said, "only obtained a truce, and all contracts of the kind may be broken at the pleasure of either contracting party. . . . Let us suppose that the French fleet had entered Naples Bay, would the French or the rebels have respected the truce for one instant? No: the French admiral would have said, I do not come here to play the part of spectator but to act. The English admiral said the same thing; he has declared that the arrival of either fleet was an event which necessarily destroyed any previous convention, since neither a French nor English admiral would come to Naples to remain with his arms crossed. . . . I therefore proposed to the cardinal that it should

be intimated to the French and the rebels, in both our names, that the truce was virtually terminated by the presence of the British fleet before Naples; . . . that the French should not be considered prisoners of war, if within two hours' time they delivered up the fort of St. Elmo to his majesty's forces; but that, as to the rebels and traitors, no human power could interfere between them and their gracious sovereign, but that they should submit freely to his clemency, for no other conditions should be granted to them. . . . The cardinal refused to join in this declaration, so I signed it myself, and sent it to the rebels. It was after having received it that they quitted their forts, as was fitting for rebels, and, as I trust, will always be the case with traitors, to be hanged, or treated according to their sovereign's good pleasure." It is hard to understand how an upright and generous nature could condescend to such miserable sophistry; how a man, admired in the British navy for his humanity and honour, and who could never see a sailor punished without turning pale, should have the lamentable courage to violate a sacred engagement, and put an old man and companion in arms to death. The influence of Lady Hamilton, no doubt, contributed to the fatal resolution; but to political passions,

the most pitiless of any, must be assigned the responsibility of this double crime. To them alone it belongs to reverse every notion of humanity and justice, and to include contempt of the most sacred obligations among the virtues of a statesman. In Lord Spencer's eyes, the motives of Lord Nelson's conduct appeared "as pure and honourable as the success of his measures had been complete." The morality of great governments has, it must be allowed, made some progress since 1799.

Ever since the month of April, 1799, Troubridge, who was full of enthusiasm, earnestly desired that Ferdinand IV. should rejoin him off Naples; but Nelson knew the king of the Two Sicilies better. "Whence did you derive such an idea?" he wrote to the captain of the Culloden. "The people devoted to the royal cause would fly to arms. The king, if on the spot, must necessarily place himself at the head of his subjects; *and I can tell you that it is a thing he would never consent to do.*" Thus, when it became necessary to take up arms to regain the government of his own country, Ferdinand IV. ran away from his capital. He was destined to re-enter it, and to give the signal for fresh crimes and further outrages. On the 5th of July, leaving the queen at Palermo, he landed at

Naples from a Neapolitan frigate, convoyed by the English frigate Seahorse. All that Captain Edote could obtain from him (and it was only obtained as a personal favour in acknowledgment of his services) was the ratification of the capitulation of Castelamare. The treaty which had been concluded with the garrisons of Castel Nuovo and Castel Uovo was not recognised by the King of Naples, any more than it had been by the English admiral; and a royal decree, condemning by a general proscription more than 40,000 citizens, pronounced sentence of death upon every one who had borne arms against the people or the Cardinal, had accepted office from the Republic, taken part in the erection of the Tree of Liberty, or assisted in the destruction of the emblems of the legitimate authority. Exasperated by such a proclamation, the lower orders of the populace gave way to their instinctive ferocity, and the Lazzaroni were a second time masters of Naples. Breaking into the houses under pretence of searching for Jacobins, but in reality in search of plunder, they dragged into the streets the unfortunate inmates who were suspected by them, carried them to the prisons already overfilled, collected faggots in the public places, and fought over the half-burnt flesh of the victims they had consumed alive.

And all this time the king held his court on board the Foudroyant, and listened there to the gross flattery of his *faithful subjects;* whilst Nelson wrote to Lord Keith that "it was impossible to witness without emotion the joy of the Neapolitans, to hear the shouts of enthusiasm with which they hailed *their father*, for the king was no longer designated by any other name. With *few exceptions*, the conduct of the nobles has been *infamous;* but the king is aware of it, and I rejoice to see him so well disposed to render to every man the justice which is due to him. Thank God *all is well*, and this country will be *more prosperous than ever.* It is their majesties' most earnest hope." What are we to infer from such language? or to think of the man who could use it? Are we to accuse him of hypocrisy, or pity his delusion?

Seconded by a considerable detachment embarked on board the English ships, the allies, whilst these horrors were going on in Naples, were gaining new advantages. After having made the fort of St. Elmo capitulate, and retaken the hostages, the last guarantee of the unfortunate patriots, they had laid siege to Capua and Gaëta; but at this crisis Lord Keith left the coast of Italy in chase of Admiral Bruix, and ordered the squadron that Nelson had placed at

the command of the King of Naples to sail to the defence of Minorca, then left at the mercy of some Spanish ships anchored at Carthagena. Notwithstanding the reiterated orders of Lord Keith, Nelson would not leave the Italian coast before he had entirely re-established Ferdinand, who had just made him Duke of Bronte. Although Minorca had not been, in fact, attacked, Nelson's obstinacy in disregarding the injunctions of Lord Keith was severely blamed by the Admiralty: besides which, everybody in England was aware of his infatuation at the court of Naples; the newspapers complained of it, and his friends were justly alarmed.

As soon as Gaëta had capitulated, Nelson, apprehending the consequences of his conduct, hastened to despatch the larger part of his fleet to Mahon, and returned to Palermo with the King of Naples. Already Generals Schipani and Spanò, taken with arms in their hands, had been immolated to the steril love of vengeance which marked this fatal restoration. General Massa, who had drawn up the capitulation, Elèonora Pimentel, that heroic woman and "*great rebel*," as Nelson called her, had followed them to the scaffold — Ettore Caraffa, Gabriel Manthoni, Dominico Cirillo, whòse pardon the queen herself implored on her knees. The Marquis

de San Felice, whose life the intercessions of the Princess Maria-Clementina, wife of the heir apparent could not save, and many others not less noble, not less to be regretted victims, were butchered as soon as the king was gone; for the agents that Ferdinand had invested with his authority were eager to avenge the rights that for a moment they had feared to lose. In a few months, the mercenary zeal of these men had cost more blood and tears than the civil war itself, whilst Ferdinand, deaf to every entreaty, confirmed their horrible sentences.

"The king is an *excellent man* at bottom," wrote Nelson; "but it is difficult to make him change his opinion. For some reason, which I do not understand, the act of amnesty, signed three months since, has not yet been promulgated. . . . *One cannot cut off the heads of a whole nation*, even though entirely composed of scoundrels." These violent acts of retribution went such lengths, that Captain Troubridge, that unbending hero, whom Nelson had left at Naples with the Culloden, and who was not, as he himself expressed it, "more tender-hearted than other people," shocked at these atrocities, began to fear that the re-action was going too far. "This day," he wrote to Nelson, August 20 1799, "eleven of the leading Jacobins, princes,

dukes, and representatives of the people, have been executed, and women have shared the same fate. I sincerely hope they will make a great sweep, and then proclaim a general amnesty, for death is nothing compared to their prisons."

Notwithstanding the full powers vested by Ferdinand in the regency, which, under the name of the *Royal Junta*, he had established at Naples, that body was by no means satisfied. They demanded the dismissal of Cardinal Ruffo, who was, as they wrote to Captain Troubridge, a real hindrance, whose presence delayed the re-establishment of order. The king had no time to listen to these complaints; he was occupied with the fête of St. Rosalia, and the junta might make the best of the difficulties thrown in their way by the cardinal. It is probable they succeeded effectually, for, a month after the departure of the king, Troubridge wrote word to Lord Nelson, that more than forty families were lamenting over the imprisonment of some of their members. "It is time," said he, "to proclaim an amnesty; not that I believe they have, as yet, made examples enough, but the law is so slow, that the innocent as well as the guilty dread being thrown into those dungeons, where the sword is so long hanging over their heads. The property of the Jacobins is selling for next to nothing, and the

king's people are buying it up. Therefore they throw a man into prison upon any excuse, in order to plunder him."

Troubridge was the intimate friend of Nelson, as he had been of Lord Jervis. He was a rough, plain man, but upright, and justly respected in the British navy. Nelson had given him his confidence, and tolerated a degree of freedom from him which he would not, perhaps, have permitted from another. The French had hardly evacuated the last posts they occupied in Italy, when Troubridge was sent to Malta to carry on the siege. He wished to have taken Nelson with him, and thus withdrawn him from the seductions of the court. "Pardon me, my lord," he writes to him, "pardon me; my sincere esteem for you urges me to broach the subject. I know that you have no pleasure in passing the whole night at cards. Why, then, sacrifice your health, taste, welfare, fortune—*everything*, in short, in that miserable court. I trust the war may soon terminate, and that peace will release us from these infamous scenes, and restore to us the smiles of our own countrywomen. You are not aware, my lord, of half that is going on, or of what people say of it. Oh, if you knew how distressed your friends are on your account, you would break with all these nightly orgies. Nothing is talked

of but the licentiousness of Palermo. I entreat you to leave it. Would that my pen could express what I feel on this subject: you would not then hesitate; for, I repeat, it is my sincere concern for your character, my lord, that alone could embolden me to incur your displeasure; but, in truth, the interest of my country compels me. . . . I curse the day I ever served the Neapolitan government! We have characters, my lord, to lose, these people have none. Our country is just, but severe, and I foresee that here we shall soon forfeit what we have gained in public opinion."

In fact, people were beginning to complain loudly in England of the scandalous conduct of Lord Nelson. "They say," wrote Vice-Admiral Goodall to him,—"they say, my dear lord, that you are in the arms of Armida, and that it wants the boldness of Ubaldo and his companion to rescue you from the charms of the enchantress." These censures at length rose to such a height, that Lady Hamilton thought it incumbent upon her to answer them. It was to her former lover, the Hon. Charles Greville, nephew of Sir William Hamilton, that she addressed her hypocritical defence.

"We are more united and more happy than ever (she wrote, Feb. 23. 1800), however it may

displease these infamous Jacobin papers, who are jealous alike of Lord Nelson, Sir William, and me. Lord Nelson is, in every acceptation of the word, a great and virtuous man; but such is the return we must expect for our sufferings and our sacrifices. It is not enough that we have lost our health in the cause of right, our characters must be slandered behind our backs. They began by saying that Sir William and Lord Nelson had fought a duel; they are living *like brothers*. Then that we had gambled, and lost. Lord Nelson *never* plays, I can give you my word of honour. Be good enough, therefore, I beg of you, to contradict these vile calumnies. Sir William and Lord Nelson laugh at them; but I am scolded by the queen and all of them, for allowing myself to be annoyed by them for a single day."

Admiral Keith, however, having returned to the Mediterranean, was himself cruising off Malta, and Nelson was obliged to join him. His usual good fortune here threw into his hands the Généreux, near Cape Passaro, a seventy-four, which had escaped the disasters of Aboukir.*

* The Généreux, under the command of Captain Lejoille, had forced the blockade of Corfu, and had gone to Ancona to obtain help. Accompanied by nine transports, carrying troops to the amount of about 1000 men and provisions, Captain Lejoille had

Attacked by two ships and one frigate, the Généreux was obliged to surrender, and the gallant Rear-Admiral Perrée, whose flag she bore, lost his life in the action. A splinter had previously struck his left eye; but he had refused to leave his post. "It is nothing, my friends," said he, to the sailors who surrounded him; "let us go on with our work." With his face covered with blood, he continued to manœuvre his ship himself, when a ball carried away his right leg. He fell senseless on the deck, and expired in a few minutes. Nelson took the Généreux to Admiral Keith, who, being summoned by important circumstances back to Genoa, left him the charge of blockading the harbour of Malta, the investment of which was complete, since Brigadier-General Graham had gone there with the troops that had been in garrison at Messina. Kept away from the court, Nelson made unceasing complaints to

left Ancona the end of Feb. 1799, and sailed to the entrance of the Port of Brindisi. That town was then in the power of the insurgents, commanded by the Corsican Boccheciampe. The Généreux having grounded, through the fault of her pilot, under the batteries of the citadel, they opened their fire upon her, and the first ball killed CaptainLejoille and wounded General Cléments, who commanded the troops. After a tolerably long cannonade, a detachment of soldiers landed and took the citadel, killing Boccheciampe in the assault. The Généreux returned to Ancona, and from thence to Toulon, where she hoisted the flag of Rear Admiral Perrée.

Lord Keith on the score of ill health, and begged to be sent back to Palermo. In vain did the commander-in-chief represent the danger of dividing the forces, and order him to re-victual at no greater distance than Syracuse. In vain did Troubridge repeat to him, "Malta cannot hold out long; the few ships that survived Aboukir are anchored in this harbour: believe a sincere friend, and do not return to Sicily now. It may be disagreeable to you to remain under sail: then, why not leave the Foudroyant, and hoist your flag in the Culloden, which can remain at anchor, and occupy yourself with the operations of the siege, in concert with the general?" Nelson could not resist. Like Anthony, he would, at that moment, have sacrificed a world to his passion, and not have regretted the loss. In March, 1800, he returned to Palermo, notwithstanding the disapprobation of Lord Keith; and during his absence the Guillaume Tell, in endeavouring to escape from the English cruizers, was captured, after a brave defence, by two ships and a frigate. Nelson endeavoured to console himself for having lost this opportunity of completing his triumph. "I thank God," he wrote to Lord Keith, "I was not present, for it would finish me could I have taken a sprig of these brave men's laurels."

Notwithstanding the repugnance that Nelson felt towards leaving Palermo, it became necessary to return to Malta. He therefore sailed back thither, carrying Sir William and Lady Hamilton with him, and a second time left his post, in order to carry them back again to Sicily. At length Sir William was recalled to England, and Nelson obtained leave to return with him, when he was addressed in the following manner by Lord Spencer:—"I could have wished, my Lord, that your health had permitted you to remain in the Mediterranean; but I think, and it is the opinion of your friends, that you will recover it better in England than by remaining inactive in a foreign court, however agreeable may be the flattering homage paid to your services."

On the 10th June, 1800, Nelson left Palermo in the Foudroyant. The Queen of Naples, who was to go to Vienna, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, were taken on board. Nelson landed with them at Leghorn, and they crossed Italy together, at the risk of falling in with some detachment of the French army, already victorious at Marengo, and embarked in a Russian frigate at Ancona, which took them to Trieste, whence they gained the capital of Austria. Here the Queen remained; but Nelson, Sir William and

Lady Hamilton continued their journey to Hamburgh, where they embarked, and on the 6th of November the conqueror of the Nile landed at Yarmouth. He was received with all the spontaneous homage which popular enthusiasm can originate — a tribute more flattering than the highest official honours. From Yarmouth to London his journey resembled a triumphal march. The people greeted with universal acclamations the battered hero, who for eight years had fought in the front of battle, and whose success had vindicated his rashness. The more refined discrimination of the upper classes, though joining in his praises, yet discerned the errors of the warrior upon whom fortune had smiled, and the scandal of his private life. Sir William and Lady Hamilton had not left him since his departure from Palermo, and they followed him to London, where Lady Nelson and his venerable father were compelled to see this odious couple take up their abode under the same roof where they had also come to welcome the return of a husband and a son; and three months had hardly expired since this anxiously expected event before Nelson, wholly perverted by his mad infatuation, cast away from him a woman he had once tenderly loved, and to whom (sad avowal of the shameful influence he obeyed) he

addressed this cold and cruel farewell:—"I take Heaven to witness that there is nothing in you or in your conduct that I could wish altered, or other than it is." It was at this period that Nelson and Collingwood met at Plymouth. Raised to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the Blue, January 1. 1801, Nelson had just hoisted his flag on board the San Josef. The flag of Rear-Admiral Collingwood was flying in the Barfleur. Since the day they had fought together off Cape St. Vincent, and shared with Troubridge the honour of the victory, the two friends had ceased to tread the same path to glory and fortune. Nelson's ambitious zeal had been better requited than Collingwood's resigned and steady devotedness. A peer of England, Nelson's name was famous all over Europe. Collingwood's had, as yet, no place in history. Of these two men, however, the one envied was the one to be compassionated. He had gained greatness and celebrity, and had lost happiness and peace.

PART V.

THE NORTHERN NAVIES.—THE FLOTILLA OF BOULOGNE.

At the moment when Nelson was returning to London, the northern powers, united by a common grievance, and exasperated by the pretensions of the British cabinet and the slights offered to the dignity of the smaller maritime states, were placing themselves under the protection of Russia, and Nelson's prediction was fulfilled—"England, after beginning this war with all Europe on her side, will end it with all Europe against her." On one side, the systematic energy of France directed the military force of Prussia and the maritime resources of Spain against Great Britain; on the other, the morbid activity of the great Catherine's fantastic successor closed the continent against the English from the Neva to the Elbe. If any thing could have lessened the importance of this last coalition, it was the singular coincidence by which the sovereign power of all the northern thrones had fallen into such eccentric hands. Christian VII. of Denmark had fallen into imbecility; but there, at least, the

prince royal (afterwards Frederick VI.), son of the unfortunate Matilda, sister of George III., had taken the reins of government with a firm hand. Gustavus IV., of Sweden, was subject to frequent fits of temporary insanity; and the Emperor of Russia, by his chivalrous manias and his versatile and absurd policy, betrayed the madman under the cloak of the despot. As to the material forces of which the armed neutrality could dispose, the documents collected at the English Admiralty gave a formidable idea of their magnitude. These documents calculated the naval power of Russia at eighty-two sail of the line, that of Denmark at twenty-three, and Sweden eighteen; but, as is always the case, a considerable allowance must be made in deducting from the *nominal* and *numerical* the really *effective* forces of these three navies. Russia, in 1801, had only sixty-one ships in a sea-worthy state; and half of these, being then in the Mediterranean or the Black Sea, were completely isolated from the Baltic fleet. This fleet, consisting of thirty-one sail of the line, was also divided and detained by the ice in the ports of St. Petersburgh, Archangel, Cronstadt, and Revel. Out of these thirty-one sail, there were hardly twenty fit to be called line-of-battle ships, and even these were ill manned, worse armed,

and commanded by officers who had no experience in fleet manœuvres. This naval armament, then, which in half a century had made so much progress, was still, in 1801, only formidable on paper. Its whole European reputation being founded upon a few skirmishes with the Turks, the Russian navy, like the Ottoman, was a mere phantom, destined to vanish, without making any serious resistance, before the ships which had been in practice during eight years of war.

It was not exactly thus with the eleven ships of which the King of Sweden was himself hastening the fitting out at Carlscrona, nor with the ten which were ready for sea at Copenhagen, and only waiting for the crews, which were being collected in the ports of Norway. Without doubt these squadrons would have had much to learn in order to arrive at the precision in manœuvring, and the perfection of detail, which distinguished the English navy. But this was an inferiority from which they might have been redeemed, by the formation of better crews. The commerce of the neutral states — that commerce for which the northern powers were then taking up arms — had increased enormously since 1793, and ought to have made a large proportion of sailors. The commerce of England had, it is

true, kept pace with it, and her 19,000 vessels were distributed in all parts of the world; but England, obliged to defend herself at so many points, and to meet such formidable enemies, had need of all her resources, and even of employing the most extreme measures, in order to find in her seafaring population men enough to furnish at once her merchant service and her 472 men-of-war. Not content with pressing in the open streets for the manning of her ships, she threw into them the vagabonds of all nations*, and even the inmates of her jails. She calculated upon her inflexible discipline for the subjugation of all these rebellious natures, and for inuring them to the sea; nevertheless, the results of this imprudent confidence was seen in the ill-suppressed mutinies, the unexpected reverses, and those frequent desertions which, between 1793 and 1804, robbed the English navy *of more than* 40,000 *men.* The crews of the Carlscrona and Copenhagen squadrons might, therefore, have easily outshone England in the quality of their seamen, since the suspension of a very active commerce had permitted Sweden and Denmark to exercise a free and boundless choice from the resources of a

* "I have on board," wrote Collingwood, Sept. 25. 1796, "representatives of all the states of Germany, — Austrians, Poles, Croatians, Hungarians — *a motley tribe!*"

numerous population accustomed to the most boisterous navigation in the world. In fact, these squadrons, had the English ventured to pursue them into the Baltic, would have possessed an immense advantage over the enemy — that, namely, of acting in a very dangerous sea, with which *they* were perfectly familiar; and supposing them to succeed in joining the Russian fleet, lying in the port of Revel, they would muster a force of thirty, or, perhaps, even thirty-five sail of the line, before which the "prestige," which had so long formed the principal strength of the British navy, might very possibly have given way. But Lord St. Vincent, who on the accession of the Addington Ministry succeeded Lord Spencer at the Admiralty, had learnt to regard maritime coalitions with indifference, and to allow for the want of concert which almost always cripples those alliances. He resolved not to be deterred by the sinister predictions with which the project of a great expedition to the Baltic had been received — a project which the genius of Pitt had bequeathed to his successors, with a view of striking a decisive blow at the coalition before the spring, which season, by freeing the Russian and Swedish ports from ice, while the harbour of Copenhagen would be already open, would permit a junction which it was necessary

at all hazards to prevent. Towards the end of February, 1801, Lord St. Vincent took Lord Spencer's place at the admiralty, and his first act was to send orders to the fleet, assembled at Yarmouth, to get under weigh, and steer for the Sound.

On the 17th of January Nelson had hoisted his flag as vice-admiral on board the San Josef, of 110 guns. His ambition was to replace Lord Keith in the Mediterranean; but in the interim, wishing to escape from the reproaches of his own conscience, and the domestic misery which he had brought upon himself, he had hastened to join the flag of Lord St. Vincent, who was commanding the Channel fleet. But even before the fall of the Pitt ministry had summoned Lord St. Vincent to the councils of the state, Nelson was placed under the orders of another admiral, Sir Hyde Parker, who had just obtained the command in the North Sea. Lord Spencer, who had already destined this squadron to enter the Baltic, rightly judged that, of all the English admirals, Nelson was the one best qualified to ensure the success of this perilous enterprise: at the same time, the uncertain temper of this great officer had made too much impression upon the Board of Admiralty not to suggest the propriety of placing under the control of some more tem-

perate, docile, and matured mind, that impetuous, daring, and brilliant courage whose caprices they had learnt to dread. The respect which in England is ever shown to long service, modified what was naturally offensive in this decree to a man already so exalted by public opinion, and Nelson, officially apprised of Lord Spencer's intentions, appeared to take this combination in good part. On the 12th of February, he left the San Josef for the Saint George, 98 guns, and going to Portsmouth to expedite the fitting out of seven sail of the line early in March, anchored with his division in Yarmouth Sound, where Sir Hyde Parker was waiting for him.

It was not customary at this time for an English vice-admiral to hoist his flag in any ship but a three-decker: it was a point of official etiquette to which the English have at all times, and not without reason, attached particular importance. The object of securing sufficient accommodation for flag-officers had therefore contributed more than any thing else to keep up a great number of these heavy and formidable machines, whose dull sailing Nelson, in his impatience, had often cursed. Out of 104 line-of-battle ships in commission, England did not reckon less than eighteen three-deckers; but although there were then thirteen of these ships

before Brest, the Admiralty would only allow two for the Baltic fleet — the London, on board which Admiral Parker hoisted his flag, and the St. George, Vice-Admiral Nelson's flag-ship. Rear-Admiral Graves had the Defiance, 74, and foreseeing the difficulties which ships drawing too much water might encounter in the Baltic, five ships of 64 guns, and two of 50, were added to the eleven 74's, which formed part of the expedition. A corps, composed of the 49th regiment, two companies of carabineers, and a detachment of artillery, was embarked in one division of the fleet; and some frigates, bombs, fire-ships, and small craft, raised the number of ships under Admiral Parker's command to a total of fifty-three sail.

A fortnight before the sailing of the fleet, a diplomatic agent, Mr. Vansittart, had set out for Copenhagen. Admiral Parker was informed by secret instructions of the object of this mission, and was directed by them, in case of the negotiation coming to a favourable issue, to sail immediately to the Bay of Revel, at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland, to surprise, by a sudden attack, the squadron of twelve ships known to be anchored in that port, and to proceed thence without loss of time to Cronstadt. The English ministers justly considered Russia to be the soul

of the coalition, and, as regarded that power, they admitted of no alternative, and entertained no doubt of the necessity of having recourse to hostilities: with regard to Denmark and Sweden he hoped much from their weakness, and, confident that the threat of a bombardment would suffice to detach the Danes from the coalition, the Admiralty directed Sir Hyde Parker so to dispose his ships, that Sweden, compelled to follow the example of Denmark, should find in this menacing appearance both reason and excuse for entering upon a pacific agreement. "If, as there was reason for supposing," Gustavus IV. decided to renew, either alone or conjointly with Denmark, his old alliance with England, the first duty of the admiral commanding in the Baltic would be to protect Sweden against the attacks and the resentment of Russia. The Addington ministry at the period when these instructions were framed, that is, March 15. 1801, did not doubt the defection of the two secondary states. The object of sending a powerful fleet into the Baltic was, as soon as this first result should be obtained, to strike a decisive blow at the Russian Navy, and to annihilate that armament, reckoned impregnable by all Europe, even in the very heart of its own dominions. A daring enterprise, in which England risked her fleets, and France,

more fatally, was doomed to risk her army! Better to appreciate this new exploit of the English Navy, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the obstacles of all sorts which the very nature of the scene of operations would present to the designs of the Admiralty. Three passages, the Sound, the Great and the Little Belt, are the channels which form the entrance from the German Ocean to the Baltic, and connect those two dangerous seas, separated from each other only by that narrow country which, under the name of Jutland, stretches northward from the mouth of the Elbe to the 58th degree of latitude. To penetrate into the Baltic, therefore, it is necessary, in the first place, to double the northern points of Jutland, by sailing through the channel where shipwrecks are so frequent, and which bears the name of *Skagerack*. Then to steer southwards through the Cattegat to where the islands of Zealand and Funen seem to fill up the space which separates Jutland and Sweden, for one of the three passages. Of these three, one is almost impracticable—the Little Belt, a narrow and intricate channel formed by Nature between the Isle of Funen and the coast of Jutland. The Great Belt—a sinuous strait, which separates the Isle of Funen and the Isle of Zealand, and enters the Baltic after a course of fifty leagues, pre-

senting difficulties which at that time* the English could not surmount. The third passage, called The Sound, that between the Island of Zealand, on which Copenhagen is built, and the southern extremity of Sweden, is the easiest and most frequented. It was long regarded as the key of the Baltic; and even in the present day the "Sound duties" received by Denmark amount yearly to above 4,000,000 francs. On the coast of Zealand the castle of Kronenburg, a palace, fortress, and state prison, commands the entrance. This castle is distant from the coast of Sweden about three miles, the tongue of land on which it stands, with its massive towers and ramparts, partly shuts out the view of the pretty little town of Elsinore; but when the last bastion of this noble building, constructed under the orders of Tycho Brahe, is past, Elsinore, with its large and excellent roadstead appears. The solitary Swedish shore presents a striking contrast with the sad-looking village of Hel[illegible]borg, at the foot of a hill, having no beach, and exposed to the north winds. The only object worth notice here is the picturesque ruin of its ancient

* Some months after this expedition, in July, 1801, Vice-Admiral Pole, who succeeded Parker and Nelson in the command of the fleet, beat through this passage. But in the month of July this was easier and safer than at the time of the Equinox.

battlemented tower. The Island of Hueen, with its whitish cliffs, occupies the middle of the channel, which enlarges rapidly below Elsinore. In the distance, and twenty-two miles from Kronenborg, may be seen the lofty steeples of Copenhagen and the low islands of Saltholm and Amag; the first nearer Sweden, the second united to the capital of Denmark by long bridges. Beyond these two islands the Sound opens into the Baltic.

Near the Island of Saltholm, on the coast of Sweden, opposite Copenhagen, stands the town of Malmo. Between these two towns, distant from each other about fifteen miles, the island of Saltholm forms two straits, one separating it from the Swedish town; the other, between Saltholm and the meadow-land of Amag, united, as we have said, to the city of Copenhagen. This last strait is itself divided in two by a shoal three miles long, called the Middel Grund, on which there are only two fathoms and a half. This is the Danish pass of Thermopylæ. The western passage, called the King's, is comprised between the port of Copenhagen, to which it forms an outer road, and the Middel Grund, the eastern passage, separates that shoal from the isle of Amag, and is called the Outer Channel. Both run north and south, and are practicable for the

largest ships; but the channel where they unite beyond the Middel Grund is shoaled, and a line-of-battle ship, to get through it, must be lightened. Rapid currents, generally following the direction of the wind, make this intricate navigation still more critical and dangerous. The Sound, then, is the most direct and natural passage for merchant ships entering the Baltic, as well as for those not going farther than Copenhagen; but it presents obstacles not to be overcome without much labour to large ships wishing to pass to the southward of the city.

Such were the difficulties which the fleet under Sir Hyde Parker had to encounter. That fleet sailed from Yarmouth the 12th March, 1801, and on the 18th made the coast of Norway, at the entrance of the Skagerack. It was dispersed by a gale, which greatly endangered the Russell, 74; drove a brig on shore, and forced Admiral Parker to anchor at the entrance of the Sound on the 21st, to assemble the fleet. While there he was joined by the Blanche frigate, having Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Drummond, the English Chargé-d'affaires, on board, on their return from Copenhagen. The propositions of Mr. Vansittart had been rejected, and it was now necessary to bring Denmark to terms before thinking of any steps against Russia. The pre-

parations for defence at Copenhagen had made an impression on the British diplomatists which, for a moment, seemed to be shared by Admiral Parker. According to Mr. Vansittart's report, the "King's Channel" had been made unapproachable from the north side. That entrance was defended by a work called the Trekronen battery, constructed on piles, and intended, together with the citadel, to protect the inner harbour, where the Danes had secured their fleet. To support this fort, which mounted thirty 24-pounders, thirty-eight 36-pounders, and a 96-pound carronade, two old line-of-battle ships, the Mars and Elephanten, were placed. It was only from the south end, therefore, of the "King's Channel," that Copenhagen could be attacked; and even on that side there were formidable obstacles, for the Danes had covered the face of the town with a long line of hulks and old ships, carrying 628 guns, and manned by 4849 men. That line-of-battle anchored about a quarter of a mile in advance of the batteries of the town, left a space of half a mile between it and the Middel Grund, with an average depth of five or six fathoms. If these first defences should be destroyed, the threat of a bombardment might probably overcome the resistance of

Denmark; but the first and greatest difficulty was to get through the King's Passage.

All these preparations did not, however, reassure the inhabitants of Copenhagen, since the news of Admiral Parker's arrival in the Sound, and Nelson's presence in the squadron. The celebrated historian Niebuhr, an eye-witness and interested spectator of these events, has given us, in his private correspondence, the most unequivocal testimony to the moral power which already belonged to Nelson's name. "We expect," he wrote to Madame Hensler, the 24th of March, "to see our line of defence exposed to a furious attack; for Nelson is in the enemy's squadron, and he will, no doubt, show that energy of which he has given so many proofs on other occasions." Nevertheless, the anxiety of the Danes did not proceed from discouragement. They knew that the Swedish squadron, promised by the 2d April, would arrive too late to be of use; that the Revel fleet could not free itself from the ice, which still closed the Gulf of Finland; but being resolved, in spite of this abandonment, not to betray the cause of the coalition, they prepared to defend the approach to their capital with obstinacy. On the day when the arrival of the fleet in the Cattegat was known there were more than a thousand volunteers enrolled in Copenhagen,

and the same self-devotion and patriotism pervaded all ranks. The university alone furnished a corps of 1200 youths, the élite of Denmark; and for some days Copenhagen presented the interesting spectacle of a people animated by one idea, and thronging round their Prince to repulse foreign invasion.

In England, where Mr. Vansittart had already reported the unfavourable reception his first overtures had met with, people anxiously expected news from the fleet. "I am quite sure of Nelson," said Lord St. Vincent to his secretary, "and should have no anxiety at all had his rank permitted him to have the chief command of the squadron; but I have less confidence in Sir Hyde Parker, because he has not yet been tried." The Admiralty had better reasons for making Nelson second in command than the respect for seniority alleged by St. Vincent; but from the day when negotiations ended, and the time was come to act, Nelson was about to force himself into the front rank. By a happy gift of his energetic nature, he was quite free from that nervousness which increases the appearance of danger, and which, as he wrote to Lord St. Vincent, "our friend Parker sometimes experiences at the thought of the dark nights and fields of ice in the Baltic." Nelson had long regretted

the useless delay which had allowed the Danes to put their capital in a state of defence. Often, at Portsmouth, when he urged on the fitting out of the ships, he used to say to his friends, "Time is our best ally — let us take care of that, since all others abandon us. Say what you will, it is on it that all depends in war." "Five minutes often make the difference between victory and defeat." When at the entrance of the Sound, he was consulted by Admiral Parker, he insisted still more warmly on the necessity of deciding at once. The season had not been severe this year, and if the ships anchored at Revel succeeded in putting to sea, it might become necessary to attack Copenhagen in presence of a fleet in observation, amounting to fifteen or twenty sail of the line, who would have the game in their own hands when opposed to a crippled fleet. As to the plans for entering the Baltic, Nelson considered them all equally practicable. In the passage of the Great Belt he saw this advantage, that a part of the fleet might be at once detached against the Russians; but he recommended above all that a moment should not be lost, and that advantage should be taken of the first fair wind to commence operations. Never did Nelson's greatness show itself in more difficult circumstances. The Invincible, line-of-battle ship,

with the flag of Admiral Totty, sent from England to reinforce the Baltic fleet, had been lost on a shoal in the North Sea*, and this sad event, which cost 400 lives, had thrown a gloom over the fleet, and awakened sinister forebodings. The pilots, frightened at the responsibility of taking line-of-battle ships where they had only been in merchantmen, were constantly giving notice of new dangers, and speaking of insurmountable obstacles. Nelson had an answer always ready, and, full of confidence in his fortune, he preserved the same calmness and serenity in the midst of these alarms.

On the 26th March, Admiral Parker at last decided on sailing, and steered for the Great Belt; but, after running along the north shore of the Isle of Zealand for some leagues, he yielded to the suggestions of Captain Otway, and resolved to enter the Sound. Before sunset, the fleet had returned to its former anchorage. Next morning, Admiral Parker, still undecided, sent to the governor of Kronenburg Castle to know whether he had orders to oppose the passage of the British fleet. The answer was such as might have been expected. He had nothing to do with politics, was his reply; but he could not allow a fleet,

* The Hammond's Knowl, sixteen miles north-east of Yarmouth.

whose object was unknown to him, to pass under the guns of the fortress without firing at them.

The English squadron was obliged, therefore, to prepare for forcing the Sound; and on the 30th March it weighed, with a fine breeze at N.N.W., and, making all sail, formed in line of battle. Nelson had left his heavy three-decker, and hoisted his flag in the Elephant, 74. He commanded the van; Admiral Parker led the centre, and Rear-Admiral Graves the rear. Since the preceding evening, Captain Murray, in the Edgar, 74, had been stationed with the flotilla of bombs and small craft to the northward of Kronenborg, and at the first shot from the Danes, the bombs opened fire upon the fort. If the two shores of the straits had been equally well defended and equally armed with heavy guns, it is certain that the English ships, obliged to pass within about a mile and a quarter of the enemy's batteries, must have sustained some loss; but they could not have been stopped; for much more difficult passages than that of the Sound have been forced by very inferior forces to that under Admiral Parker. Not a shot, however, was fired from the Swedish side, nor was there any appearance of batteries perceptible. The English fleet, therefore, kept on that side of the straits, and thus avoided the fire of the Kronenborg, which

it did not long reply to. The shot fired from that fortress fell short of the English ships, which, keeping on the Swedish side, anchored at noon off the Island of Huen, fifteen miles from Copenhagen. The division under Captain Murray, after having thrown a great number of shells into the town of Elsinore and fortress of Kronenborg, also weighed, and passed the straits astern of the fleet, out of range of the enemy's guns. The English sustained no other loss this day than some sailors of the Isis, from the bursting of a 24-pounder. The Danes had two killed and fifteen badly wounded by the shells of the flotilla; but the cannon of Kronenborg warned the inhabitants of Copenhagen to prepare for greater disasters.

As soon as the fleet had anchored, Admiral Parker embarked, with Nelson and Rear-Admiral Graves, in one of the smaller vessels, and proceeded towards the town to satisfy himself as to its means of defence. The reconnaissance showed him that Mr. Vansittart's reports had not been exaggerated, and that same evening a council of war was held on board the London. It was difficult to plan any attack which did not expose the ships which had to execute it to great dangers; but Nelson put an end to all vacillation by declaring he was ready to make the

attempt with ten ships. Admiral Parker, who, throughout the expedition, showed the most honourable self-abnegation, did not fear to accept the offer of his second in command, and of his own accord added two 50-gun ships to the squadron Nelson had demanded. The impossibility of attacking Copenhagen by the King's Channel from the northward being admitted, it was resolved that Nelson, with his twelve line-of-battle ships, five frigates, and all the flotilla of bombs and small craft, should sail through the outer channel, as far as the Isle of Amag, and there wait until a southerly wind should permit him to enter the King's Channel from the south. Admiral Parker, on his side, was to anchor with the eight ships he kept under his immediate orders, to the North of that channel, in order to take the Trekronen battery in reverse, and to be ready to cover any of Nelson's ships which might be forced to retire from the action. The danger which such ships would incur, while getting out of fire, from having to pass under the enemy's strongest batteries, formed one of the principal difficulties of the expedition.

During the night which preceded his daring attack, Nelson employed himself in sounding round the middle-ground—an operation which the Danes, with unpardonable want of vigilance,

did not attempt to prevent. Next day, at one P.M., the squadron, preceded by the gallant Captain Riou, in the Amazon frigate, entered the outer channel, and only anchored at eight o'clock at night, after having doubled, by the aid of the last light air, the extremity of that dangerous bank, ever since famous in the British annals. At this anchorage, the English squadron was only two miles from the Danish ships, and in a position to steer directly for the enemy's line, when the wind should change. The night was employed, like the preceding, in sounding the passage, then but imperfectly known. Captain Hardy, who was destined to receive Nelson's last embrace at Trafalgar, had left the St. George to follow the Admiral, whom he sincerely loved. He wished to execute this operation himself, and using a sounding pole, not to make any noise, he sounded up to the first Danish ship, to make sure that the squadron would meet no obstacles in the passage. Nelson could not close his eyes all night, and passed a part of it in dictating his orders to his secretaries — for the wind had changed, and promised to aid his enterprise next day. The Danish line, composed of eighteen ships, occupied a space of about a mile and a half, and covered the face of the town, from the Trekronen battery to the Isle of Amag. The plan of attack was, to pass along

this line, each English ship anchoring by the stern in the station assigned her, so as to make her guns bear obliquely upon her opponent in the Danish line.* The frigates were to act upon the two extremities of the line.

At nine o'clock in the morning of April 2d, the English squadron made sail, and the Edgar, 74, first entered the passage. The Agamemnon should have followed, but a strong current setting to the Northward, prevented her from weathering the Middel-grund, and though she tried to warp to windward, she never got round the shoal. The Polyphemus, 64, therefore, took her place, and advanced, followed by the Isis, 50: the fifth ship, the Bellona, kept too close to the Middel-grund, and got ashore about 450 yards from the Danish rear ship. The Russell following her, committed the same fault, and grounded also. This double accident might have caused the loss of the British squadron; for the pilots having constantly repeated, in opposition to Hardy's assertion, that the least water was on the side of the Danish line, the ships had been ordered to keep close to the Middel-grund. Nelson's good fortune decided that the ship next to

* There does not seem to be any proof that this oblique position was prescribed to the ships under Nelson's orders, and it certainly was not taken up.—*Translator's note.*

the Russell should be his own flag-ship, the Elephant, and with the *coup d'œil* of a sailor accustomed to thread his way through rocks and shoals from childhood, he decided that Captain Hardy was right and the pilots wrong. Giving the order, therefore, to leave the grounded ships on the right, he entered the deep channel, and anchored about 200 yards from the Dannebrog, bearing Commodore Fischer's broad pendant. The rear-guard followed the example, and at half-past eleven all the ships, except the three which had grounded, the Agamemnon, Bellona, and Russell, had taken up their stations in line. For above an hour the action had been going on between the British van and the Danish ships, while two bombs, the only ones which had succeeded in getting into position, opened their fire at the Danish town and arsenal, throwing their shells over the two fleets.

Meanwhile, Admiral Parker had made sail with his eight ships at the same time that Nelson weighed; but having wind and current against them, he was obliged to anchor again too far from the northern batteries to give any support to the division engaged. He, however, detached three ships to supply the place of the three which were aground, and anxiously awaited the issue of a contest in which he could take no part.

The Danes displayed heroic valour on this day: the action had lasted above three hours, without any slackening of their fire, and Admiral Parker, witnessing this unexpected resistance, was miserable at the thought of his own inaction. "The fire is too heavy," he observed, "for Nelson to withstand long; if he is forced to retire, it must be by signal from me, though my personal reputation should suffer, for it would be cowardly to leave him to bear the blame." Influenced by this generous but inconsiderate feeling, he made the signal to discontinue the engagement. The manner in which this order was received is well known. "Foley," said Nelson, turning to the captain of the Elephant, "you know that I have but one eye, so I have a right to be blind at times. Upon my honour," he said, putting his spy-glass to the eye he had lost at the siege of Calvi, "I do not see Parker's signal. Keep my signal for close action flying, and nail it to the mast. It is thus that I answer such signals." The English squadron owed its safety to this noble act of courage. If Nelson, obeying Admiral Parker's orders, had made the signal to retreat, the greater part of these ships, half disabled, could not have got out of the intricate channel in which they were engaged, while the Trekronen battery, almost untouched, cut off

their retreat, and kept Parker's division in check.*

Three frigates and two corvettes, under the orders of Captain Riou, had taken the position which the Bellona and Russell should have occupied, opposite the Trekronen battery. Favoured by their light draft of water, this division had been able to obey Admiral Parker's signal, and the injuries they had sustained made retreat necessary. They cut their cables, and, pursued by a parting discharge, which was very fatal, steered for the line-of-battle ships which awaited them outside. At the moment that the Amazon presented her stern to the enemy's batteries,

* The account given of Nelson's conduct on this occasion in Southey's Life, is as follows: — "The signal-lieutenant had reported Admiral Parker's signal to discontinue the action, and asked Nelson whether he should repeat it. 'No,' he replied, 'acknowledge it.' Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted, and being answered in the affirmative, said, 'Mind you keep it so.' He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. 'Do you know,' said he to Mr. Ferguson, 'what is shown on board the commander-in-chief?' 'No. 39.' Mr. Ferguson asked him what that meant. 'Why, to leave off action.' Then, shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words, 'Leave off action? Now, damn me if I do!' 'You know, Foley,' turning to the captain, 'I have only one eye; I have a right to be blind sometimes;' and then, putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, 'I really do not see the signal.' Presently he exclaimed, 'Damn the signal; keep mine for closer fighting flying: that's the way I answer such signals! nail mine to the mast.'" — *Translator's note.*

Captain Rion was cut in two by a shot. That excellent officer was retreating, overwhelmed with despair. "What will Nelson think of us?" said he, with bitterness. Sitting on a gun, and already wounded in the head by a splinter, he was encouraging his men when he received his mortal wound.

It was half-past one before fate seemed to decide in favour of the English fleet. The cables of one Danish ship, the Zealand, and a heavy corvette, mounting 24-pounders, the Rendsborg, had been cut by the enemy's shot. These two ships drifted on shore; the corvette on a sand-bank—the line-of-battle ship under the Trekronen battery, leaving a dangerous gap in the line of defence. An old three-decker, which the Danes had "razé," and manned with 515 men, and 56 guns, the Provestein, was the first ship which struck: it was the van ship of their line, and was supported, though at too great a distance, by the batteries on the Isle of Amag. This ship had been engaged by the Isis and Polyphemus, and had received some broadsides from a frigate, which, raking her completely, had soon dismounted the greater part of her guns. Though reduced to this state, she still refused to strike. M. de Lassen, who commanded, after having fought for near an hour with three guns, the only

ones not dismounted, threw himself overboard to avoid striking his flag, and was picked up by the Danish boats, together with about 100 men, who thus escaped from the slaughter. In the centre, the Dannebrog had, from the commencement of the action, sustained the attack of three English ships: she had now caught fire, and Commodore Fischer was obliged to transfer his broad pennant to the Holstein, which was engaged with the Monarch and Defiance, at the other extremity of the line. About two o'clock, notwithstanding the efforts made to subdue it, the conflagration on board the Dannebrog burst out with increased fury; and that ship, on which the Elephant and Glatton were firing with grape-shot, was irretrievably lost. She cut her cables, and drifted slowly towards the beach, while the flames rose in whirling masses through the ports and hatchways. The sailors who were still able to move, threw themselves into the sea to escape the horrors of burning; but out of 336 men, composing the crew of the Dannebrog, 270 were already disabled, and but few of these heroic victims could be snatched from the flames. The floating batteries, anchored near the commodore's ship, now found themselves overwhelmed by the fire of the British van, which had no enemy of adequate force to contend with. The conquerors,

however, were unable to take possession of the ships they had subdued: as soon as their boats approached them, they were received by a fire of musketry, which obliged them to retire. The Provestein even, and the Vagrien, though abandoned by their crews, were still defended by the batteries of the Isle of Amag, which did not allow the enemy to board them.

On the left wing the Danes fought with less disadvantage. The Prince Royal had gone to that side, and gave his orders from one of the batteries with the tact and coolness of a veteran commander. An ardent and devoted crowd surrounded him, and begged the favour of being allowed to join the reinforcements which constantly replaced the crews decimated by the enemy. In this manner the ships, whose fire the English thought was silenced, re-opened it again with fresh vigour. Captain Thura, of the Infodstratten, had fallen among the first, under the fire of the Defiance, Admiral Graves's flag-ship. All the officers, except one lieutenant, had been killed or severely wounded, and the Prince had just been informed of the desperate situation of that ship. "Thurä is dead!" said his Royal Highness to the officers around him; "which of you will take his place?" "If it please God, I have yet strength enough," answered Schroeder-

see, a brave officer, whose ill health had recently compelled him to resign, and without waiting for the Prince's consent, he jumped into the boat, which took him to the Infodstratten. On reaching that ship's deck, he found himself surrounded by the dead and wounded, and had scarce given his first orders, when he fell dead, by the body of the captain he came to replace. A lieutenant, who had accompanied him, then took the command, and did not strike his colours until reduced to the last extremity.

Nelson, feeling anxious about a victory, which, though so dearly bought, did not secure him the passage through the King's Channel, sought the means of opening a negotiation with the enemy. He thought he saw an opening in what he considered the improper resistance which prevented his taking possession of the ships that had struck to him*, and he sent a flag of truce to the Crown Prince, to remonstrate against this irregular proceeding. A young English captain, Sir Frederick Thesiger, who had served some years in the Russian navy, and now acted as one of Nelson's aides-de-camp, carried the message to the Crown

* This is not quite correct. Nelson saw that the Danish ships, after striking their colours, opened their fire again ;—a proceeding clearly at variance with all the rules of war, and disentitling the crews of those ships to quarter.—*Translator's note.*

Prince. While Sir Frederick Thesiger executed this mission, the cannonade had entirely ceased astern of the Elephant; but the Ganges, Monarch, and Defiance still suffered greatly from the enemy's fire. At half-past two, however, Commodore Fischer saw himself compelled to abandon the Holstein, to which ship he had gone after the burning of the Dannebrog, the former ship and the Infodstratten having been subdued. Two floating batteries, anchored near them, finding themselves unsupported, struck their colours, and the Elvira corvette, Nyborg, and Aggershuus, in a sinking state, ran aground under the batteries of Copenhagen. After four hours of a desperate contest, the Danes had lost six sail of the line, seven smaller ships, and 1800 men. The day, therefore, was entirely lost to them, and the face of the city left completely undefended, when Sir Frederick Thesiger reached the Crown Prince. At the same time, the Danes were not quite at the mercy of their enemies. At the entrance of the inner harbour, under the orders of Commodore Stein Bille, were two hulks, mounting 134 guns; the Mars and Elephantin, two ships of 74 guns; the Danemark and Trekronen, one frigate, the Iris, two brigs, and fourteen gun-boats. These, with the Trekronen battery, defended the arsenal and the squadron, the principal object of

desire to the English, and anxiety to the Danes. Preparations had been made for storming this battery, but it was found to be impracticable; and Captains Foley and Fremantle, in whom Nelson had full confidence, recommended that, instead of directing fresh forces against this point, the fleet should get clear of the King's Channel.

The English fleet had suffered too much to be deaf to the counsels of prudence. It reckoned 1200 men disabled, 300 more than at the battle of the Nile. The Edgar and Isis, which had fought the heroic Provestein, and the Monarch, opposed to the Holstein, had 120 killed, and 363 wounded. Never had the English fought so bloody a battle: their masts, sails, and rigging were cut to pieces, and "riddled" with shot. The fear of grounding had prevented them from engaging as close as Nelson had wished. They had fought at an average distance of 300 or 400 yards from ships of thick scantling, which, being for the most part without masts, were lost sight of by the British in the smoke; nor had they derived as much advantage from their guns, especially the 68-pounder carronades, a new species of ordnance, as they would have done at a less distance.* Their victory, however, had been

* It is a singular proof of the inefficient gunnery of the day that,

complete.* They were at liberty to send in their bombs when the wind should be favourable, and to throw their shells all over the capital of Denmark. At the same time, a bombardment, and especially a naval bombardment, is not so destructive as is supposed: it may frighten women and children, and cause individual loss: it may set fire to a great town in several places, without,

in perfectly smooth water, and at a distance where every shot should have told, the battle lasted four hours, and then left the British fleet uninjured, to such a degree, at least, that two ships only were sent home.—*Translator's note.*

* This manly admission of the fact that the victory was "complete," contrasts favourably with the dishonest detraction of Thiers, who, at p. 470, vol. ii. 12mo edition, unwilling to admit that Englishmen could gain a victory, calls it "La pretendue victoire." The case may thus be stated. Nelson, with *ten* ships, had destroyed the Danish line of defence by sea (one ship having grounded at a distance may be excluded, as also the Agamemnon, which never came into action at all). When the battle ended, we may suppose that Nelson's three most injured ships were incapable of renewing it. To replace these he had three others, which had not been seriously engaged, two having grounded, and one having missed her station. But there was also the *whole reserve division* under Sir H. Parker, a force nearly equal to Nelson's, and perfectly fresh, which, with the knowledge then acquired of the navigation, might have been more easily brought into action next day; and there were, besides, sufficient bombs to burn the Danish fleet in the inner harbour. Even if we admit, therefore, that some British ships might have been lost in their retreat on the 2d, still, while the English had a powerful reserve and the Danes none at all, the victory clearly belonged to the former, as the conduct of the Crown Prince sufficiently showed. A *beaten* fleet would hardly have prepared, as Nelson's did, to attack the Swedish and Russian navies immediately after its defeat.—*Translator's note.*

on that account, overcoming the resistance of an heroic population. If the Crown Prince had been able coolly to take this view of the matter, the English would hardly have effected their retreat that night, under the fire of the batteries, without the loss of some ships. But to have rejected Nelson's advances, the Prince must have been insensible to the hideous spectacle of the Dannebrog blown up, with nearly all her wounded; — he must have consented to demand fresh sacrifices from that brave population, already so cruelly maltreated; and Prince Frederic, who, after a long reign, carried with him to the tomb, in 1839, the regrets of a whole nation, possessed too fully the qualities of a good king to have that cruel constancy. He gave orders to cease firing, and sent his aide-de-camp, General Lindholm, on board the Elephant, to ask simply, "What was the object of Lord Nelson's letter?" To which the admiral replied, that "Lord Nelson's object in sending on shore a flag of truce is humanity: he therefore consents that hostilities shall cease till Lord Nelson can take his prisoners out of all his prizes. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his Royal Highness, begs leave to say that he will ever esteem it the greatest victory he ever gained, if this flag of truce may be the happy forerunner of a lasting and happy union

between my most gracious Sovereign and his Majesty the King of Denmark."* — NELSON and BRONTE."

The London was then nearly four miles distant from the Elephant; but General Lindholm consented to proceed on board the former ship. Scarcely had he quitted the Elephant, when Nelson made the signal to weigh in succession and sail through the channel, passing under the Trekronen battery. The performance of this evolution showed how impossible it would have been before the suspension of hostilities: the Defiance and Elephant grounded within gunshot of the Danish batteries; a frigate also struck on the Middel-grund; a third of the British squadron was a-ground. The moment, it must be allowed, would have been ill-chosen to have been too exacting. Nelson, who had hurried after General Lindholm on board the London, pressed Admiral Parker to conclude a truce for twenty-four hours, during which he might get off the ships which had grounded, and enter upon further negotiations.

* The answer given above is in the very words of Nelson, as recorded in his official Letter-book, grammatical errors and all. The versions given by the French author is unintentionally incorrect; and M. Thiers, whose object was to distort truth to the prejudice of England, does not mention Nelson's answer at all, because it is too clearly the letter of a conqueror in the hour of victory.—*Translator's note.*

Though greatly fatigued, the British did not lose an instant of this unexpected truce. Assisted by the boats of Sir H. Parker's division, they got their ships afloat during the night, and towed their prizes out of gun-shot of the Danish batteries; they even took possession of the Zealand line-of-battle ship (whose capture might have been disputed) under the guns of the Trekronen battery — an act of weakness on the part of the commandant of that fort, for which the Commodore Stein Bille called him out.

This day, thus actively employed by the British, was a day of mourning in Copenhagen. In the midst of those dying and mutilated men who were being conveyed to the hospitals, and of those disfigured corpses which were being carried to the tomb, people came trembling in search of friends, husbands, and fathers, while weeping women filled the streets with their groans, or ran out of the city carrying their children in their arms. People bewailed the losses of the day, or trembled for the morrow. That great city was new to the horrors of war; the oldest inhabitant of Copenhagen had never heard the guns of an enemy thunder against their walls. National pride, however, added a noble exultation to the feeling of grief. The Danes felt themselves raised in the eyes of Europe by their honourable defeat, and

mutually encouraged each other not to belie the glorious reputation thus gained.

The same evening Nelson had an interview with the Crown Prince. He landed, accompanied by Captains Hardy and Fremantle: a numerous escort awaited him on the shore, and attended him to the Palace. He then passed through a dense and threatening crowd, which thronged towards him, and carried Admiral Parker's propositions to the Prince. Sir Hyde desired that Denmark should immediately separate herself from her allies, open her ports to British shipping, and disarm her squadron; but these haughty pretensions were firmly met by the Crown Prince. "I do not hope much from this negotiation," wrote Lord Nelson next day to Mr. Addington, the prime minister, "as it appears clearly to me that Denmark would at this moment renounce all her alliances to be friends with us, if fear of Russia was not the preponderating consideration." The disgrace, and not the danger of their defection, was in fact the greatest obstacle to a pacific arrangement; but the point of honour was not the only tie which attached Denmark to the common cause. To treat with England was to sacrifice the rights of her flag; and even in his extremity the Crown Prince could not resign himself to that humilia-

tion. "To allow our ships of war to be detained," said he to the admiral—"to see a Danish fleet intercepted by the most pitiful privateer—and that privateer visit the ships of a convoy one after another, and carry off those which should appear suspicious, was what Denmark would never permit."

The basis of negotiation on Nelson's first interview with the Crown Prince, was such an armistice as should allow the English fleet time to act against the Swedes and Russians; but the English admirals found an adversary in the Prince's Council still more able and persevering than the Prince himself. Count Bernstorff, minister of foreign affairs, disputed the ground inch by inch with the fiery impatience of Nelson. "Leave off your ministerial duplicity," wrote that admiral, "and recollect that you have British admirals to deal with, who come with their hearts in their hands." * Little influenced by this freedom, and unmoved by its rudeness, Count Bernstorff wished to give notice to the Swedes, whose fleet had at last put to sea, and to afford the Russians still detained in the port of Revel, time to place their ships in safety in the

* This was not a letter, but a verbal message of Nelson's. See Nelson's Dispatches, vol. iv. p. 341.—*Translator's note.*

harbours of Carlscrona and Cronstadt. He understood very well that if Denmark yielded too quickly to the terms of the conqueror, Nelson would immediately enter the Baltic, overwhelm the dispersed allies, and return to Copenhagen to enforce more favourable conditions. While the negotiations were thus protracted, Admiral Parker occupied himself in destroying the prizes and advancing the Bombs into the King's Channel; while the Danes, on their side, threw up new batteries, and firmly awaited the recommencement of hostilities. It was five days after Nelson's interview with the Prince that the conditions of an armistice were settled, and it was finally ratified by the Prince and Admiral Parker on the 9th of April. During the interval the Danish government had learned the assassination of Paul I. on the night of March 23d, and it determined to subscribe to the terms offered before the English admiral heard the news and turned it to account. The length of the truce was fixed at fourteen weeks, and during that time Denmark was to abstain from all co-operation with the powers who signed the treaty of armed neutrality, to suspend all armaments, and make no hostile movement with its squadron. The English ships were to have a free passage through the King's Channel, and to be supplied

with water and provisions either at Copenhagen, or any other point of Jutland and Denmark.

As soon as this treaty was signed, Nelson dreaded the impression it would produce in England, feeling himself that it was the seal of imperfect success; and yet the Baltic expedition will always be regarded by seamen as his highest claim to glory. He alone could have displayed such daring and perseverance. He alone could have faced the immense difficulties of this enterprise, and triumphed over them. When, in 1807, England, after the treaty of Tilsit, resolved upon another attack on Copenhagen, twenty-five sail of the line, forty frigates, and a land force of 27,000 men, were employed to accomplish what Nelson undertook with twelve ships! This last time, too, the entrance of the Sound was passed before the commencement of hostilities; no ship penetrated the King's Channel and braved the fire of the Danish batteries, but they surrounded the island of Zealand: whilst an army was landed above Elsinore, and the town of Copenhagen, set on fire by the shells and hot shot poured upon it, only succumbed to a regular siege.

In Nelson's mind, still unaware of the death of Paul, the war of the Baltic was only commenced. It was nothing to have disarmed Den-

mark, if the fleets of Sweden and Russia should escape; for which reason Nelson feared that precious time had been lost during the negotiations. "I make no scruple in saying," he wrote to Lord St. Vincent on the 9th of April, "that I would have been at Revel fourteen days ago; that without this armistice the fleet* would never have gone but by order from the Admiralty, and with it I dare say we shall not go this week."

Though full of respect for Sir Hyde Parker's fine qualities, Nelson was impatient at what he termed his idleness. It was two days after the conclusion of the armistice, and after having sent the Danish ship Holstein, the only one he had not burnt, to England, together with the Monarch and Isis†, carrying the wounded, that

* The French author fell into a mistake as to *what* fleet Nelson meant would not sail except by admiralty order, and supposed it to be the Russian; but the words in the text are Nelson's own.—*Translator's note.*

† The fact that these two ships were the *only* ones sent to England when active operations were about to commence against the Swedish and Russian navies, sufficiently disproves M. Thiers assertion as to the beaten and disabled state of Nelson's fleet at Copenhagen. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive a more gratuitous and unfounded statement than that author makes (upon *no authority but his own*) at p. 445. vol. ii. Thiers says:—"Encore quelques instants et la flotte de Nelson presque mise hors de combat, était obligée de se retirer à moitié détruite." If Nelson could maintain his ground for four hours while the whole line of Danish defence

Sir Hyde Parker thought of entering the Baltic. But to clear the banks, which extend between the islands of Amag and Saltholm, it was necessary to take the guns out of most of the ships and put them in merchant vessels; and even then several ships touched the ground more than once in this perilous passage. At last, on April 12th, after much labour, the English, to the great surprise of the northern sailors, penetrated into the Baltic by a route supposed to be impassable for large ships of war. With sixteen sail of the line, Sir Hyde steered at once for the island of Bornholm, where he hoped to surprise the Swedish fleet: but it was already too late: that squadron, informed of the events at Copenhagen, had sought refuge at Carlscrona. Parker followed them thither; but received on the 23d of April a letter from Count Pahlen, informing him of the Emperor Paul's death and Alexander's wish to renew the friendly relations of the two courts, momentarily interrupted. This letter decided him to suspend operations, and return to the magnificent bay of Kioge, situated below Copenhagen. There he found orders to return

was in existence, is it credible that after that line was either destroyed or silenced, a few moments more would have given the Danes a victory? What was to happen in the "quelques instants" which M. Thiers says would have been so fatal?—*Translator's note.*

to England, and leave the command of the fleet to Nelson. The policy of mere observation adopted by Sir H. Parker, on learning an event which was of itself to dissolve the maritime confederacy of the North, little suited the impetuous admiral who succeeded him. To hoist in the boats and prepare for sea, was the first signal by which Nelson showed the fleet that the command was in very different hands. On the 7th of May, 1801, he quitted Kioge Bay, and steering for Bornholm, anchored there to await the termination of a gale. There he divided the fleet into two squadrons, and leaving the worst sailing ships to observe the Swedish squadron of six sail of the line, he proceeded to Revel with ten 74's, two frigates, and a brig. He wished to surprise the Russian fleet, and with that valuable pledge in his hands to require the immediate withdrawal of the embargo, which was still laid on the British merchant ships seized by order of Paul I.; but, at the same time he took steps to reassure the Emperor Alexander as to his intentions by writing to Count Pahlen. "I am happy in this opportunity of assuring your Excellency that my orders towards Russia from England are of the most pacific and friendly nature, and I have to request that you will assure his Imperial Majesty that my inclination so perfectly

accords with my orders, that I had determined to show myself with a squadron in the Bay of Revel (or at Cronstadt, if the Emperor would rather wish me to go there), to mark the friendship which I trust in God will ever subsist between our two gracious sovereigns; and it will, likewise, be of great service in assisting to navigate to England many of the English merchant-vessels which have remained all the winter in Russia. I have taken care that in the squadron which I bring up with me there shall be neither bomb-ships, fire-ships, nor any of the flotilla, in order more strongly to mark that I wish it to be considered as a mark of the greatest personal respect to his Imperial Majesty. I beg leave to assure your Excellency that I shall feel truly happy in the opportunity of assuring you personally how much I feel your Excellency's obliged and obedient servant." A favourable wind took this *pacific* squadron rapidly to the entrance of the Gulf of Finland. On May 12th it anchored in the Bay of Revel; but the Russian fleet had sailed from thence on the 3d, after sawing the ice six feet in thickness, which had frozen up the inner harbour, where they had passed the winter, and had taken refuge at Cronstadt. This port, at the bottom of the Gulf of Finland, the military arsenal and bulwark of St. Petersburg,

is, like the Swedish port of Carlscrona, defended by a narrow entrance and formidable batteries, which might defy the daring even of a Nelson. The Russian government, therefore, feeling secure about the fleet, was only the more offended at the presence of the British force in the Bay of Revel. Count Pahlen immediately wrote to Nelson, that the Emperor did not consider such a step compatible with the earnest desire expressed by the British Cabinet for the re-establishment of the harmony which had so long prevailed between the two monarchies. "His Majesty commands me to tell you, my Lord, that the only proof he will accept of the sincerity of your intentions is the prompt withdrawal of the fleet you command, and that no negotiation can take place as long as a naval force remains in sight of the fortifications." This language became a great Power, and never was a more severe lesson given to that restless and turbulent spirit which too often actuated the British navy at that time; an unfortunate disposition too long encouraged by the Admiralty, and the traces of which are still visible in our own days.*

* Though this is evidently said in perfect good faith, our own experience would rather lead us to say that the "esprit tracassier et remuant" is to be found among the French than the British naval officers in the present day. A French officer is for ever fancying some insults to his "Pavillon;" a British officer never imagines anything of the kind.—*Translator's note.*

Nelson, perceiving too late the error he had committed, quitted the Bay of Revel the same day that he received the letter, and wrote to Count Pahlen in the most conciliatory tone he could assume:—"Your Excellency will have the goodness to observe to the Emperor that I did not even enter into the outer bay of Revel without the consent of their Excellencies the governor and admiral." Though he tried to dissemble his anger, Nelson could not forgive the Russian government for its dignified conduct. "I do not think," he said, "that Count Pahlen would have dared to write me such a letter had the Russian fleet been still at Revel." In crossing the Baltic the British fleet met the Latone frigate, carrying the new ambassador charged with the arrangement of the differences between the two courts; and Lord St. Helens, who finally obtained a formal recognition of the right of search, so long disputed, convinced the impatient Admiral that any imperious demonstration would be prejudicial to the negotiation. Nelson, therefore, after this unsuccessful expedition to Revel, saw himself condemned to be a passive spectator of the efforts of diplomacy. Becoming more restless and agitated than ever, he did not pass a day without importuning the Admiralty for his recall. "The sharp air of the north," he

wrote to his friends, "freezes me to the heart; I am as good as dead if I do not return home; and yet" (he added in one of those noble impulses which fully redeemed his faults) "I would not wish to die a natural death."

Though an invaluable servant wherever a blow had to be struck, Nelson sorely tried the patience of the Admiralty when in want of that active occupation which was indispensable to him; and so irritable a chief was a bad interpreter of Mr. Addington's pacific policy. It was not, therefore, without some secret satisfaction that the Admiralty yielded to Nelson's repeated requests, and sent him a successor: but the news caused universal regret in the English fleet, for Nelson was still, in the eyes of both officers and seamen, the same kind, devoted leader that he had been in the days of his youth. His chief care was to ensure the due provisioning of his squadron, and to procure wholesome nourishment for the men, and the fleet was constantly in motion with this object. Whether at anchor in the Bay of Kioge, or before the port of Rostock, on the coast of Mecklenburg, it was rarely without a supply of fresh provisions. A second object of Nelson was, the preservation and judicious distribution of the spare stores in the fleet —a wise economy which England still observes,

and to which he owed his exemption from those wants of which so many admirals complain. "For our part," he wrote to the Admiralty, "I venture to say, that if we have many imaginary wants, we have but few real ones." To arrive at this result, Nelson neither spared time nor trouble: at four or five in the morning he was out of bed, and never breakfasted later than six. One or two of his midshipmen shared this early repast; for Nelson loved that joyous nursery of the fleet, and did not fear to laugh with those boys, often showing himself more boyish than themselves. At eight every ship was invariably clean, and till sunset nothing which occurred in the fleet escaped the watchful eye of its chief. Nelson's health, however, was seriously injured at the very time when he displayed this marvellous activity. It suffered from the extreme agitation of mind which he had experienced since the conclusion of the armistice. In him, mental anxiety always produced a slight nervous fever and a suffocating sensation, which he traced to the time of his unsuccessful pursuit of the French fleet in 1798. "That expedition almost broke my heart," he often said, "and on any fresh anxiety I still feel the effects." His natural irritability was, moreover, increased by the indifference with which the glorious tidings of Co-

penhagen were received in England. That brilliant episode of a daring campaign* had not the "éclat" of the great battles of St. Vincent and Aboukir. It had gained for Nelson the title of Viscount; but the City of London had withheld the customary thanks, which it shortly afterwards bestowed on the far less perilous expedition under Lord Keith, which brought about the evacuation of Egypt. Upon this Nelson wrote to the Lord Mayor:—"Having waited with the greatest patience until every individual who had rendered the smallest service to the country had been marked by the City of London, Lord Nelson wrote a letter to the Lord Mayor, stating his sorrow that those under his command, who fought the most bloody battle, and obtained the most complete victory of any naval battle in this, or, as Lord Nelson believes, in any war, had not the honour to receive from the great City of London the same mark of approbation which had been bestowed on others. . . . Lord Nelson flatters himself that the Lord Mayor elect and the Sheriffs will approve of his feelings on this occasion, and consider, that if Lord Nelson could

* The French word "Campagne" is here rendered literally, though never used in that sense in England. But why should we not use it when we have no other word for a continued series of operations?—*Translator's note.*

forget the services of those who have fought and bled under his command, he would ill deserve to be so supported as he always has been." Notwithstanding this honourable feeling, there was a want of dignity in soliciting the suffrages of the country in such pressing terms, and wishing to gain its admiration by storm. Let us, however, confess that the indiscreet ardour which would not become the statesman may well be excused in the warrior. It seems, indeed, to indicate more love of glory than pure patriotism, more of impulse then true elevation; but such is too frequently, in modern days, the actuating motive of military heroism.

Vice-Admiral Pole had been appointed to succeed Nelson in the Baltic command, and on the 19th June, 1801, hoisted his flag in the St. George. Nelson, refusing the frigate which his successor wished to place at his disposal, left the Bay of Kioge in a little brig, which landed him at Yarmouth on the 1st July. His first care was to visit the seamen and soldiers in the hospitals of the town, who had been wounded at Copenhagen, and the same evening, after discharging that humane duty, he set off for London, where Sir William and Lady Hamilton awaited him.

On his arrival in England Nelson found the

public mind occupied by a new danger. Buonaparte, delivered from all anxiety on the side of the Continent by the treaty of Luneville, conceived the idea of transporting his legions to the British soil, and also threatened to conduct those soldiers who had twice conquered Italy to London. The port of Boulogne was to be the rendezvous of the immense flotilla which he had ordered should be built in all the ports of the Channel. The invasion of England by means of gun-boats and flat boats, had long been a favourite plan of the First Consul: he had suggested it in 1797; now adopted it in 1801, and three years later raised it to gigantic proportions. In the month of July, nine divisions of gun-vessels, and the troops they could embark, were assembled at Boulogne, under the orders of Rear-Admiral Latouche Tréville. It was not, it is true, the first time that the threat of invasion alarmed England; but never had it appeared so close at hand. The Addington ministry, therefore, could not slight the public agitation, and the Admiralty deferred to the popular will, by appointing Nelson, on the 24th July, to command the squadron of defence assembled between Orfordness and Beachy Head.

Nelson then reckoned two tried friends in the Admiralty — St. Vincent and Sir Thomas Trou-

bridge. The latter, whose courageous friendship we have had occasion to admire, was not only one of the best officers of the British navy, "as full of resources as his old Culloden was of defects," according to Nelson's expression: he was also, as Lord St. Vincent declared, an invaluable counsellor, "brave as his sword, stiff and stainless as its blade." He professed a sincere admiration for the conqueror of the Nile, but profoundly grieved at the unhappy passion which enthralled the hero; he feared lest the powerful and successful arm which had twice saved England should become enervated by weak indulgences. Thus Nelson had scarcely received the command of the defensive force, when Lord St. Vincent and Troubridge pressed him to proceed to the Downs, where a frigate was ready to hoist his flag. All these efforts of an austere affection had, unhappily, become futile. A new tie bound Nelson for ever to the yoke of that artful woman, who, after bringing a stain on his glorious career while living, proved faithless to his memory, and, after many humiliations, died near Calais, in 1814, loaded with debt and ignominy. About the month of February, 1801, a child of mystery was brought to the parish church of St. Marylebone, where it was registered under the name

of Horatia Nelson Thompson. Horatia *, whom Nelson always called his adopted child, was, it cannot now be doubted, in spite of useless denials, the daughter of Lady Hamilton. The birth of this child, the fruit of a double adultery, drew closer the criminal bands, and finally alienated Nelson from his wife. He thought he had done enough for Lady Nelson by assigning her a pension of 1800*l.* a-year; and his aged father, who himself said that this grief would shorten his days, vainly strove to bring him back to an outraged wife, against whom, even in his infatuation, he had never uttered a reproach.

It was at this period that Nelson commissioned Sir W. Hamilton to purchase the Merton Place property, about eight miles from London. His design in buying that country residence was to leave it to Lady Hamilton at his death, and, until then, to reside there with his friends, on a footing of the most perfect intimacy. Unhappy passion! Fatal rock for so great a character! That man, to whom Providence had given the genius of war — whom England, in the hour of danger, presented like a buckler against her foes, would many times have deserted the post of

* In the month of Feb. 1822, Horatia Nelson Thompson married the Rev. Philip Ward, now rector of Tenterden, in the county of Kent. They had eight children.

honour to fly to the enjoyment of unworthy love, had not Troubridge and St. Vincent retained him by their prayers. "Your presence on the coast," wrote the latter, "has produced such a happy effect on the public mind, that it would be very desirable you should give up your intention of coming to London." To these just remonstrances Nelson answered by complaints of ill-health, and by murmurs. He complained of the cold: Troubridge urged him to wear flannel; — of sea sickness: Earl St. Vincent kindly recommended patience, saying, "The command you hold does not require you to keep at sea in bad weather. Do not think, therefore, of giving it up at a time when no Englishman has a right to refuse his service to his country." Nelson, thus repulsed by his friends, vented his grief to Lady Hamilton. "The Admiralty," he wrote to her, "has neither bowels nor conscience. I wish they had my sufferings. *Mister* Troubridge, who is now one of my lords and masters, amuses himself at my expense. As for me, I have grown much thinner, and if these gentlemen had shown themselves less indifferent to my complaints, my health would not have suffered so much: or at all events, I should have recovered it in a comfortable room, by a good fire, and surrounded by real friends."

Such was Nelson: an indefinable, and, as it were, double character, moulded of two different clays, — an astonishing mixture of greatness and weakness, — wearying the Admiralty with his grievances, and filling Europe with his fame. But on that stage, where the Earl of St. Vincent and Troubridge detained him in spite of himself, that noble spirit every now and then recovered its masculine energy. The memorandum which Nelson addressed to his officers, on taking command of the squadron in the Downs, is, perhaps, of all the official documents contained in his correspondence, the one which best exemplifies his cool and certain "coup-d'œil," accustomed to take in a wide field of view. In a few words the illustrious Admiral traces boldly, and with a master-hand, the general outline of his plan, purposely omitting details. A less experienced mind would have feared being too brief: Nelson, on the contrary, only dreaded being too explicit. He stops where the uncertainty of future events begins, and avoids preciseness about what must, in the nature of things, be vague, lest he should open the door to indecision or inertness. According to his idea, the First Consul could only meditate a coup-de-main on the metropolis, and 40,000 men *, at most, he thought would be em-

* Would 40,000 men, thrown on the coast of England, have

ployed on that service. He conceived that, with a view to create alarm on several points at once,

sufficed then to reach London, and dictate a peace to the British cabinet?' The pride of our neighbours may be outraged by such an idea, but it is certain that at the outbreak of a war, to-day, for instance, such an operation would be by no means impossible. Such is the opinion that an officer of the British navy, the Hon. E. Plunkett, Capt. R.N., has expressed, in a book published by him in 1846, under the title of "The Past and Future of the British Navy," p. 229. 2d Edition: — "Bonaparte asserted, and Thiers repeats, that forty-eight hours of French mastery in the Channel would have sealed the fate of England. This may be untrue in respect of the period to which the assertion referred, for with a year's notice we could hardly have been unprepared. * * *

"That our few regiments would make all the resistance which could be expected from the numbers, and more than would be made by an equal number of any other country, we have enough of British feeling to believe. But the army, excluding the 30,000 men at least, which Ireland would demand, could not exceed 20,000 or 25,000 disposable men.

"The pensioners, also (those at least who have retained their limbs, and are not much crippled by lumbago), might be useful; but to speak of a 'warlike peasantry,' (what weapon do they excel in?) taking any part in the short and sharp contest that would decide the fate of England, or at least of the capital, is madness. Under peculiar circumstances an armed peasantry may greatly harass and impede an invading army; but in England the two most essential circumstances, time and space to act in, would be wanting. A force landing in Sussex would by two days marches through a country untraversed by mountains, rivers, marshes, or forests, reach London. In so short a march there would be no room for the desultory operations of an armed peasantry to produce any effect. They might harass the enemy's rear, or annoy his flanks, but to commit peasants in action against regular troops, would be to insure their total and irretrievable dispersion, and possibly to compromise the regular troops with which they acted. Besides this,—to convene the heads of departments,—to decide on a plan of defence,—to issue the necessary orders,—to take

20,000 men would be landed some sixty or seventy miles from London to the westward of Dover, and the same number to the eastward of that port; 200 or 250 gun-vessels, assembled at Boulogne, might carry that division, and, in a calm, could cross the Straits in less than twelve hours with their oars. At the same moment, the telegraph might convey orders for the second division, at Ostend and Dunkirk, to sail. It was probable that at the same time the fleets at Brest, Rochefort, and the Texel would not remain idle, but might effect some important diversion, whether in Ireland or some point on the coast of England. In any case, by making a show of sailing, those fleets would detain the English blockading forces in the Bay of Biscay and the

the various precautions, and all this in ignorance of an enemy's force, designs, and position, is a task beyond the routine duties of a government, and likely to consume much time. It were strange, indeed, if an invading army had not gained some twenty miles on their pre-arranged route before our scattered regiments could even get together near London; or a force of peasantry could be put in possession of the arms which they know not how to use. Had we days to deal with instead of hours, indeed something might be done; but London is little more than forty miles from the coast,—a distance which an army can, and often has, marched within the twenty-four hours. Then the necessity of covering Portsmouth, as well as London, must embarrass our only army, and oblige them to take up a position so far to the westward as to leave Woolwich, with its immense ordnance open to attack; and Woolwich is, of course (in 'England, which is famous for negligence,' as Marlborough said), unfortified."

North Sea,—thus preventing them from giving succour to the points attacked. To oppose any attempt of the flotilla, therefore, the force assembled between Orford-ness and Beachy Head alone could be reckoned on. This force was composed of a squadron of frigates and small craft to watch the enemy's movements, and a flotilla, specially intended for the defence of the coast. Nelson wished that this flotilla, partly manned by the maritime militia, known as "Sea Fencibles," should be stationed from the Downs to Dover. If it should happen to be a calm when the French gun-boats appeared in sight, they were to row towards them with all their might; not to engage them with too inferior forces, but to watch them, and hang upon them in their advance, until a favourable opportunity occurred for attacking them. If the least breeze sprung up, it was the frigates and brigs that were to destroy the invading army; but if the calm continued, the English flotilla, whatever might be its inferiority, was, without hesitation, to attack the enemy the instant they reached the British shore. They were to attack whatever portion they might—the half or two-thirds; it would always be a useful diversion in favour of the troops who were to resist the landing, because the guns of the French boats being in the bows, their sterns would be exposed, with-

out defence to their assailants. "Whenever the enemy's flotilla is in sight," added Nelson, "our divisions are to unite, but not intermix, and to be ready to execute such orders as the indispensable circumstances may require. For this purpose, men of such confidence in each other should be looked for, that (as far as human foresight can go) no little jealousy may creep into any man's mind, but all be animated by the same desire of preventing the descent of the enemy on our coasts." However well considered these measures were, they did not suffice to satisfy the general impatience. The British press, the importunate interpreter of public opinion, did not cease to harass the government, and to repeat that it was in the enemy's own ports where their flotilla should be crushed. The Admiralty, therefore, found itself compelled, in deference to this outcry, to order Nelson to bombard the port of Boulogne; but Admiral Latouche was informed of the project. He came out of the port, where his vessels, crowded together, would have run great risk, and formed them outside the piers in a long line, composed of six brigs, two schooners, twenty gun-vessels, and a great number of flat-boats. On the 4th of August, Nelson came himself at day-break to anchor his bombs before the French line, hoping, that to

avoid this attack, the flotilla would retire again into the port, where he proposed to send fire-ships next night into the thick mass of vessels. About nine in the morning the bombardment began, but it did not affect the line formed, and had no other result than sinking one gun-boat and one flat-boat. Not a man was hurt in the flotilla, while our gun-boats and land-batteries kept up a smart fire on the English bombs, where a captain of artillery and two sailors were wounded by a shell.

This first attempt, therefore, had completely failed; but Nelson prepared for a more serious one, the success of which he did not doubt. On the 15th of August he anchored about 6000 yards from the French flotilla, still formed in line before the port of Boulogne. He brought with him launches and pinnaces of all sizes, by the aid of which he hoped to take or burn the French gun-vessels. The English boats amounted to fifty-seven, formed into four divisions, under the orders of Captains Somerville, Parker, Cotgrave, and Jones. The loss of his arm prevented Nelson taking a personal share in this expedition; but he strove to ensure its success by the best arrangements and all the foresight which might redeem the daring imprudence of the enterprise. In each division two boats were spe-

cially appointed to cut the cables and warps of the vessels attacked. These boats, provided with a tow-rope, having a grappling-iron to throw on board the enemy, were not to think of attacking her, but to tow her out. The other boats were to attack and board the vessels thus towed out of the line. Each one, moreover, had a sharp axe, a match, and a fire-ball, or other incendiary substance, so as to be able either to take possession of, or burn, the vessel boarded. The sailors were armed with pikes, swords, and "tomahawks;" the marines with their muskets and bayonets. Nelson ordered the boats here, as at Teneriffe, to take each other in tow, that they might all arrive at the same time, and mutually support each other.

At half-past ten at night the boats were manned, and at eleven, upon the Medusa, Nelson's flag-ship, showing six lanterns at her main-deck ports, they pushed off, and formed, in the order prescribed, astern of the Medusa. From thence, on a signal being made, they started together, but by routes somewhat diverging, for the shore of Boulogne. The "parole" was "Nelson," and the "countersign" "Bronte." The first division, commanded by Captain Somerville, which was ordered to attack the right wing of the flotilla, found itself carried by the tide to the eastward of

Boulogne; the divisions of Captains Parker and Cotgrave did not meet with the same obstacles, having steered directly for the entrance of the harbour, and at half an hour after midnight they attacked the centre of the French line.* Parker, at the head of part of his division, boarded the brig Etna, bearing the broad pendant of the gallant Captain Pevrieux; but the boarding-nettings† which surrounded the brig opposed an insurmountable barrier to the English: 200 soldiers, in addition to the sailors, received them with a sustained fire of musketry, and threw them back into their boats with the bayonet. Parker himself was severely wounded in the

* It is necessary to observe that these French gun-vessels were very formidable vessels, the smallest of them equal to perhaps ten ships' boats like those of the English on this occasion. James, the naval historian, says, "The brigs were vessels of 200 to 250 tons, armed with from 4 to 8 heavy long guns, 24, 18, and, in some cases, 36-pounders. The account of a comparatively small flat taken at Havre this year (1801) may suffice for the generality of those at Boulogne. This flat drew but 3½ feet of water, had very stout bulwarks, and carried 30 seamen, besides 150 soldiers; she was armed with one 13-inch mortar, one 24-pounder, four swivels, and small arms. Such were the vessels attacked by the British ships' boats. The only matter of surprise is, not that the attempt failed, but that it was ever made.—*Translator's note.*

† A boarding netting is a strong rope net suspended from a ship's yards, and reaching the water. As it can neither be cut through by axes nor swords, but will only yield to the slow operation of a knife, it may well be called here "an insurmountable barrier."—*Translator's note.*

thigh, and would have been made prisoner, but for the self-devotion of one of his midshipmen. Other boats had attempted to take the Volcan, and were equally repulsed. The attack led by Captain Cotgrave met with no better success; and these two divisions were in full retreat when Captain Somerville reached the port. That brave officer was not discouraged by the defeat of his companions; he dashed at the right wing, and already imagined himself master of a French brig, when a heavy fire of musketry from the surrounding vessels forced him to retreat precipitately, and he got clear, after suffering a considerable loss. The fourth division, which should have attacked our left wing, had, like that of Captain Somerville, the tide against them, and was able to reach the scene of action only in time to pick up the wounded, and to assist the other divisions in their flight. This hand-to-hand*

* M. Jurien de la Gravière, in using the phrase "hand-to-hand," forgets his own account of the "insurmountable barriers," in the shape of "boarding-netting," which *prevented* the English from getting at their *encaged* opponents. He also forgets the strong chains by which the French vessels were secured to each other and to the ground. Nevertheless, the inequality between the combatants in point of number, the French having three whole battalions of soldiers embarked (see M. Thiers), besides their crews, which latter alone must have been at least five to one against the English *engaged*, would have made success scarce possible, except the French had been either taken by surprise or panic-stricken. In M. Thiers' account of this affair, the misrepresentations are of a

battle turned, therefore, entirely to the advantage of the French: it cost the English 170 killed and wounded, and produced a great sensation across the Channel. It was the second check of the kind Nelson had met with. At Boulogne, as at Teneriffe, he had met with unforeseen difficulties, but he had also left too much to chance, and counted too much on the negligence of his enemies. At the same time, if, at Teneriffe, he had not by two fruitless attempts awakened the attention of the Spaniards, or if, at Boulogne, he had not had to deal with such a man as Latouche Treville, it is probable he might have succeeded in both attacks, for the English, during the war,

kind which *could* not have been accidental, and the deductions he draws are as palpably unfair and untrue as any of the mistatements with which his book abounds. Quite keeping out of sight the fact, that a "cutting out" expedition is the most desperate operation in naval warfare, as the party attacked are in the position of an army strongly entrenched, while the assailants are in open defenceless boats, M. Thiers argues as if equal numbers of English and French had met on equal terms, and the superior valour of the latter had prevailed. When M. Thiers asserts that Nelson had 2000 picked men for this attack, he gives a fair sample of his general veracity; but his whole account is shamefully untrue. He, however, *admits* that three whole battalions of soldiers were embarked for the defence of vessels, that one would have thought his hero, Latouche Treville (Nelson's rival, according to Thiers) would have deemed sufficiently defended by their own crews. M. Jurien de la Gravière is sometimes mistaken; but there is a wide difference between errors like his, which are those of an honourable mind, and those of Thiers, *always* tending to depreciate the English.—*Translator's note.*

often succeeded in similar enterprises, through our want of vigilance. It is more uncommon to find a regular performance of duty, and a sustained watchfulness in our ships, than the most exalted self-devotion, and the most heroic courage. Happily, Latouche Treville guarded the flotilla like a beleaguered fortress, kept all hands constantly on the alert, and required that the duty should be carried on in his brigs and gun-vessels before the port of Boulogne, as it ought to be in presence of the enemy. The English boats found our vessels prepared to receive them; their boarding-nettings triced up, their guns loaded, and their crews on deck. Thus the attack met the same fate that more formidable ones would have done, had the courage of our sailors been directed by such chiefs as Latouche Treville.

Nelson was much affected by this reverse, and especially by the death of Captain Parker, whom he loved as his own son, and who did not survive his wound; but he planned having his revenge, and meditated an attack on Flushing. It was, above all things, necessary to destroy the "prestige" of the flotilla, which had carried alarm into the very cabinet. If the ministry applied to professional men, they got as many different opinions as they consulted admirals. Lord St.

Vincent was for closely blockading all the French Channel ports; Lord Hood, for keeping the ships in the British ports, and leaving a few small vessels to watch the flotilla. In seven months those "flat boats," which were laughed at at first, had become the object of universal interest. Even General Dumouriez thought himself called on, under the circumstances, to provide for the *safety of England and Europe.* Sad instance of the perversion of men's minds at that great epoch! This man, who had saved France in the defiles of L'Argonne, now gave the afflicting sight of an aimless activity and a sacrilegious zeal. In 1801 he addressed projects for the defence of the British coast to Nelson, in the same manner that, in 1814, he sent Wellington plans of a campaign for the invasion of France.*

The anxiety caused by the assembling of this flotilla in the Channel was, therefore, much greater than people were willing to allow. The project of invasion, which the English vainly

* Dumouriez wrote to Nelson, sending him a long document on the defence of the coast: "I have deeply studied the subject-matter of this note as a French soldier, wishing to learn the best means of landing on your shores. A nobler interest unites us now in the same cause; the cause of kings, of religion, of morality, and law; their fate and that of all Europe depends on the safety of your country. Be assured of my desire to contribute to it, and that beyond such general interests I may add the warmest friendship for yourself."

affected to despise, contributed powerfully to the success of the negotiations already commenced. A general weariness, moreover, weighed on the public mind, and even the men who had gone through these years of trial with most honour, sighed for that repose which they had long ceased to know. Earl St. Vincent, who had served in three great wars, had never seen such contests, such bloody scenes of action. "What ravages this war has made in our ranks!" he wrote to Nelson, on learning the death of Captain Parker. "May we soon see the last of these sacrifices!" As to Collingwood, who was at this moment before Brest, under the orders of Admiral Cornwallis, he received with enthusiasm the news of an expected peace, and wrote, "I hope that our generation has seen the last of their wars." Amiable illusions, destined to be painfully dispelled! The 12th October, 1801, hostilities were suspended between England and France, and the Treaty of Amiens, six months later, confirmed this truce, and served to prolong it; but the struggle was only interrupted, shortly to recommence with more bitterness than ever. From 1793 to 1802 the war had sometimes paused; the exhausted nations appeared to lean to some arrangement; it had been hinted at, and even attempted by negotiations. From 1803 to 1814

no such feeling came to moderate hostilities or to calm the passions of mortal hate; when the curtain again rose upon these two powerful adversaries, Europe, though agitated, did not pronounce between them. France stood erect on the shores of Boulogne, with England before her; Europe awaited the event—awaited it for two years. It is the history of these two years we have still to retrace: they saw the first defeat of the Empire, the last victory of Nelson.

PART VI.

THE FRENCH NAVY UNDER NAPOLEON.—THE SPANISH NAVY.—TRAFALGAR.

REVOLUTIONARY France had triumphed. In accepting the Peace of Amiens, England, the last of her enemies, and the only one whom she still feared, had at length laid down her arms. What, then, had been the consequence of this bloody collision, and what were the respective positions of the two adversaries when they emerged from the struggle? England restored to France all the colonies which she had taken in the war, and reserved only Trinidad and Ceylon of what had been taken from the allies of France, a small accession of territory, which seemed but imperfectly to restore the balance between the two powers; but if France had enlarged her boundaries on the Continent, England had acquired the absolute empire of the seas. By prodigious efforts she had raised her navy to 189 sail of the line, whilst that of France was reduced to 47. Out of these 189 ships, England had 126 afloat; the ports of France hardly contained 36. In

this augmentation of the English navy, 50 line-of-battle ships captured from France or her allies formed a considerable proportion; and nevertheless this number comprised but a part of the losses that we had incurred in this unfortunate war, for these losses amounted to 55 sail of the line on the part of France, 18 on that of Holland, 10 taken from Spain, and 2 from Denmark. In comparison of these, 85 captured or destroyed, the loss to the English fleet was not worth mentioning. From 1793 to 1802, England had only lost 20 ships: 15 had been destroyed by accidents, and 5 only had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Such was the deplorable balance of this great war. Had the guerilla sort of warfare, so often urged upon the directory, produced more favourable results? We had changed the general disposition and employment of our naval forces more than once during these lengthened hostilities, but we had never changed the internal organisation of our ships. In spite of these fatal oversights, the devotion of our sailors had not always been fruitless. Nevertheless, notwithstanding some glorious triumphs, fortune had not seconded our hopes on this new battle ground. After having dragged our allies into this fatal course, and given to the enemy's cruizers 184 frigates, 224 brigs or corvettes, 950

privateers, 6200 merchant ships, by the dispersion of our forces, after having seen the government compelled to forbid privateering in order to preserve some sailors, we found ourselves overwhelmed, but not instructed by so many disasters. For the first time in that country which had produced a Duguay-Trouin, and a Suffren, people, foolishly forgetting the immortal glory of three reigns, had dared to assert that Frenchmen were unfit for naval war. Even the sound of our victorious cannon at Algesiras had scarcely silenced this unjust and discouraging opinion.

Buonaparte, then, found the naval force of France in a condition bordering upon ruin when he undertook to make it an agent of his vast designs. The project which he had formed of conducting his legions to England had grown considerably in his imagination since the Peace of Amiens: the flotilla, composed of more than 2000 sail, was become an "armada," and there can be little doubt that the conjunction of such means would have enabled the First Consul to realise almost infallibly the plans with which his ambition seemed satisfied in 1801. To have landed a military force on some point of the English coast, strong enough to have taken some important maritime town, would have been mere child's play to this flotilla. The conqueror of Italy

and Egypt entertained higher thoughts; he no longer cared to intimidate England, but to subdue and possess it. He intended landing 120,000 men at once, and repeating the battle of Hastings on the shores of Kent or Sussex. It seems that he had, at first, believed that the flotilla, armed with 3000 heavy guns, and manageable by oars as well as sails, would be able to break through the English squadron. For this a favourable moment, a calm day, or at least a fog, were necessary, and Buonaparte was accustomed to draw in the lottery of fortune greater prizes than these. He, however, yielded to the obstacles which were represented to him on all sides, and turned his mind to protecting the passage of the flotilla by the presence of a French fleet in the Channel. Appropriating to his purpose the remains of the Spanish and Dutch navies, he hastened to collect the ships that England had not yet destroyed, and prepared, by a circuitous route, to bring them between Dover and Boulogne; from the renewal of hostilities to the eve of the battle of Trafalgar, every thing tended towards this one object. It was a dream slowly unravelled, which one saw begin, continue, touch for an instant the favourable crisis, and then end with a catastrophe.

From the day on which the existence of a

large naval power had struck the First Consul as being necessary to the accomplishment of his enterprise, he had bent those powerful energies with which he carried out all his projects to the reparation of our losses. In March, 1803, 10 ships were to be put on the stocks at Flushing, and in our three great commercial ports, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseilles. Brest was to build 3 more, L'Orient 5, Rochefort 6, Toulon 4, Genoa 2, St. Malo 2.* The effective force of our fleet might thus amount in two years to 66 sail of the line, a force which the English had already exceeded. Our ports were blockaded, and from the 1st of June, 1803, 60 ships had taken up their stations along our coast. Cornwallis was cruising off Brest, Collingwood in the Bay of Biscay, Admiral Keith in the Channel, Lord Nelson off Toulon. Nelson had earnestly solicited the command of the Mediterranean, which everything seemed to mark as the principal theatre of the war. Malta, Corfu, Sicily, Egypt, seemed to hold out equal attractions to the French squadrons, and Latouche Tréville, who enjoyed the confidence of the First Consul, commanded at Toulon. His squadron only consisted of seven sail of the line,

* The ships which were to be built at Nantes, Bordeaux, Marseilles and St. Malo, were never finished; the timbers prepared for them were transferred to our great naval arsenals.

but two ships were under repair in the dockyard, and three others were about to be launched.

On the 8th of July, 1803, Nelson, whose flag was flying on board the Victory, joined the squadron which had preceded him to the Mediterranean, under Rear-Admiral Bickerton off Cape Sicié. For four months he never left this rough service, and when the rigour of the winter and want of water obliged him to seek a port, in order to recruit and refit, he would not hear of Malta, declaring he even preferred *Spithead*, as being quite as near. His opinion was so decided on this point, that the ships which stood in need of repairs sailed for Gibraltar in preference to Malta. "A good west wind," he wrote to the Admiralty, "will bring them back to me in a few days; but if I send them to Malta, I do not know when I may see them again." He had thought of taking the English fleet to one of the ports of Sardinia; but Oristan did not seem sufficiently secure, and San Pietro was too far off. The Captain of the Agincourt had discovered in the Straits of Bonifacio, sheltered by the Madalena Islands, a large bay, which he declared capable of receiving a squadron. Nelson determined to avail himself of it; and on the 31st of October, after having beat for several days against easterly winds, anchored in the roads, which still

bear the name of Agincourt. Thence extending his frigates as far as Toulon, he kept the French fleet in sight, and was ready to give it chase in whatever direction it should sail on leaving the port. He felt, however, how precarious a possession this excellent station would be should the French think of attacking it; the Straits of Bonifacio, so easy to clear and so difficult to guard, appeared to him an inadequate safeguard for the Madalena Islands. The neutrality of Sardinia, then placed under the powerful guarantee of Russia, did not remove his objections, and he would not willingly have confided in anything but the occupation of this important position by a detachment of English troops. "Would not his Majesty consent," he writes to the English minister at the court of Sardinia, "to receive two or three hundred English soldiers in the island of Madalena? It would be the surest means of resisting an invasion on the Corsican side." "Sardinia (he constantly repeated) is the most important position in the Mediterranean, and the harbour of Madalena the most important of the Sardinian ports. There is an anchorage as good as Trincomale, and only twenty-four hours' sail from Toulon. Thus Sardinia, which covers Naples, Sicily, Egypt, and all the Turkish dominions, also blockades Toulon;

for if the enemy's fleet sails to the westward, the same wind which blows them thither is favourable for giving them chase; and if they sail south, they must pass within your reach. Malta cannot be compared with Sardinia; and if I lost that island I should expect to lose the French fleet." To lose the French fleet was, in Nelson's confident mind, losing the opportunity of beating it. This time he would have encountered a formidable adversary. Impetuous and persevering, Latouche Tréville was a man fitted for the task of rousing our navy from the torpor into which its late reverses had thrown it. At the age of fifty-nine, with a constitution undermined by fever, the seeds of which he had brought from St. Domingo, he had all the activity of youth and health. It was the fourth war in which he had served; for he had first fought under the orders of M. de Conflans, been three times engaged during the memorable struggle which freed the American continent, and had borne, in 1792, under the walls of Naples and Cagliari that glorious tricolour before which he burned to humble the pride of England. When he arrived at Toulon, he found seven ships of the line and four frigates, ill manned and in bad order. The officers only slept on board their ships when actually on duty. In a few days every thing was changed. The

communication with the shore was interrupted; the squadron, lying at moorings, and ready to slip them at the first signal, formed a long line of battle from Fort Aiguillette to the Lazaretto; the frigates were stationed under the batteries of Fort Lamalgue; and the constant presence of the officers on board their ships restored the crews to that activity and subordination so easily maintained among French sailors when their officers only set them the example. Before Admiral Latouche took the command, the English frigates used to come with impunity to the entrance of the harbour to reconnoitre our squadron, and judge of their progress in fitting for sea. Now, however, a line-of-battle ship and frigate, each appointed in turn to cruize outside the roads, obliged them to keep at a distance. If the enemy sent in more considerable forces, another ship of the line and a second frigate immediately made sail, and the entire squadron was kept ready to support them. From the heights of Cape Sepet, where the admiral posted himself every morning in observation, he watched the enemy's ships, and directed the movements of his own squadron. These frequent sorties, this constant expectation of battle animated our sailors, and filled them with enthusiasm and ardour. "M. Latouche is all ready for sea,"

wrote Nelson to his friends, "and by the manner in which his ships are worked, I perceive that they are well manned; but, for my part, I command such a fleet as has seldom been seen; and certainly, in this respect, no admiral can say he is more fortunate than me. M. Latouche sometimes ventures outside Cape Sepet. I wish he would be so good as to come out to the Porquerolles, and we shall see what stuff his ships are made of." . . "All his manœuvres hitherto have been mere gasconade: nevertheless I am confident that when he is ordered for any service he will risk falling in with us, and the event of a battle to try and accomplish his orders." Everything shows, indeed, that Latouche *would* have had this courage. In the month of July, 1804, two of our frigates, which were cruising inside the islands of Hyeres, to drive away some English privateers, had found themselves compelled by a calm to anchor under the castle of Porquerolles. Nelson heard of it, and resolved to attack them. The Isle of Porquerolles, which commands part of the Bay of Hyeres, may be doubled at either of its extremities, and Nelson detached two frigates and a line-of-battle ship to the eastward to cut off the retreat of our ships, steering for the narrower passage himself with the rest of his squadron.

Admiral Latouche baffled this movement. In fourteen minutes his eight ships were under sail, and standing towards the enemy. Nelson had then but five ships to oppose to the eight French: he immediately recalled the line-of-battle ship and frigates which he had detached to the eastward of Porquerolles, and retreated under every sail, like the lion which retires, but is prepared to turn upon its pursuer. Nelson's anger was extreme when he learnt a few days afterwards, from the French papers, that Latouche Tréville had boasted of having pursued him until night-fall.* "You will have seen M. Latouche's letter," he writes to his friends, "of how he chased me,

* Nelson's extreme anger was surely excusable, considering that he reduced his force to five ships, purposely to tempt Latouche Tréville into an engagement, and that he had on many occasions resolved to bring the French to action with a great disparity of force.

Nelson's own account of this transaction is entitled to at least as much credit as M. Tréville's, and is far more consistent with his known character. "M. Latouche came out with eight sail of the line and six frigates, cut a caper off Sepet, and went in again. I was off with five ships of the line, and *brought-to* for his attack, although I did not think that anything was meant serious, but merely a gasconade." — *Letters to his Excellency Hugh Elliot*, June 18. 1804.

Moreover, the somewhat coarse expression quoted by the French author, occurs only in a private letter to his brother, written at a moment of very pardonable irritation, and was not intended for "the multitude" at all.—*Translator's note.*

and how I *ran*. I keep it; and, by God, if I take him, he shall *eat* it."

Such coarse boasting flattered the passions of the multitude, and contributed to Nelson's popularity; but history records them with a disapproving regret that such paltry feelings should be harboured by so great a mind, and that so much bitterness should be allied to so much glory.

A year, however, had elapsed, and the French fleet had not yet left Toulon. "These ships," wrote Nelson, "cannot be long before they put to sea. What then is their destination? Is it Ireland or the Levant?" His anxious mind was always balancing these two alternatives. Sometimes he persuaded himself that the French squadron would certainly leave the Mediterranean; but, if it passed the Straits, would Ireland be indeed its object? Would it not rather join the 7000 troops who were to be embarked at Toulon for the garrisons of Guadaloupe and Martinique, and take possession of the English West India Islands? Nelson, alive to the possibility of such a plan, intended to follow through the Straits and give them chase. "I will pursue them to the Indies, if necessary," he wrote to the governor of Malta. This idea had scarcely struck him, when fresh information changed the

current of his thoughts. A French squadron, on its way from St. Domingo, had put in to Ferrol, where it was blockaded by Admiral Cochrane. If this squadron should join that of Toulon, Nelson already foresaw that Egypt and the Morea would be at the mercy of our troops. He then turned his attention to the choice of a position, where he might intercept our several squadrons before they could effect a junction. Another fact that still more engrossed him was the presence of twenty-one French ships at Brest and five at Rochefort. Admiral Bruix, in 1799, had raised the blockades of Cadiz and Carthagena, and collected forty French and Spanish ships in the Mediterranean. An enterprising admiral, by eluding the vigilance of Cornwallis, who was frequently obliged to return to Portsmouth for the winter, might get out of Brest and join the ships of Rochefort and Ferrol before the news of his departure was received at Spithead. As soon as Nelson heard of the appointment of Gantheaume to the command of the Brest fleet, he felt assured that Buonaparte's intention was to send this naval force into a sea with which Gantheaume was said to be particularly well acquainted. "Besides," said he, "it is on that side that Buonaparte wishes to extend his conquests, and there, consequently, that we should oppose him

with large armies and large fleets." In the midst of his perplexities Nelson preserved his personal daring and his confidence in his own fortune. Although his forces were inferior to those of Latouche Tréville, and he expected to see that admiral joined by fresh reinforcements, he did not fear to weaken his squadron by leaving a line-of-battle ship in the Bay of Naples, ready to receive the royal family, and convey them to Palermo, should the French troops cross the frontier of the kingdom.

France had just raised to imperial power the man who had saved her from the arms of all Europe and from anarchy: the invasion of England was in active preparation, and the Toulon fleet was increased to ten sail of the line. Latouche Tréville was to conduct it to Cadiz, there to be joined by the Aigle, then to free the five ships blockaded in Rochefort, and, with sixteen sail of the line, to appear in the Channel whilst Gantheaume was keeping Cornwallis at bay off Brest. The English had only seven or eight ships in the Downs, and the squadron which was blockading Texel could not forsake that station without leaving the sea free to the Dutch fleet composed of five ships and four frigates, that eighty transport vessels were waiting to accompany. Of all the emperor's changing projects, this one

was assuredly the most promising; it offered the double advantage of only sending out in the summer months ships which had long been unaccustomed to the sea, and of keeping merely a flotilla in the Channel, less exposed than a numerous fleet to separations and those delays which are almost inseparable from it. Every thing appeared to augur well for this enterprise, when the death of Admiral Latouche obliged the emperor to postpone its execution. Latouche Tréville died on board the Bucentaur, August 20. 1804. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, a young officer who had risen under Admiral Martin, in the war of 1795, was second in command at Toulon; and at the age of thirty-four found himself called upon to take the temporary command of our navy. The influence of Latouche Tréville was still felt on board his squadron, and enabled Dumanoir to undertake the responsible office fearlessly. The emperor, however, desired a more experienced head to hold so high an office, and Vice-Admiral Villeneuve, signalised by his brave defence of Malta, the dangers of which siege he had shared with General Vaubois, was pointed out to him by Admiral Décrès. Villeneuve had the unfortunate recollections of Aboukir against him; but the emperor looked upon this affair in a favourable light, and, less struck by

the inaction of the rear-ships during the battle than by the success of their retreat, praised Admiral Villeneuve for having saved the only French ships which had escaped the disaster, and thought he recognised in this manœuvre the most skilful, and, above all, the *most fortunate*, officer of his fleet. Thus it seems that the emperor's decision was formed less with reference to Villeneuve's talents than to the supposed *good fortune*, which had formerly gained his confidence.* Villeneuve, in the prime of life (for he was then only forty-two), did, in fact, possess very valuable qualities, but not those which the service he was selected for required. He was brave, well acquainted with his duty, and formed to do honour to a navy which, like that of England, should only have had to fight; yet his mild and melancholy disposition, his retiring and ascetic temper, were ill suited to the ambitious part which the emperor intended for him.†

* What a singular weakness of a great mind! Villeneuve's Correspondence with Admiral Décrès, however, seems to prove it. "You see," wrote Villeneuve, after arriving in the West Indies, and while encouraged by his first success, "that the emperor was not wrong in reckoning upon *my good fortune*."

† No one has better described the grave and melancholy dignity of that character which has become historical, than Collingwood, whose prisoner and companion Villeneuve was for several days after the battle of Trafalgar. "Admiral Villeneuve is a well-bred

At the time that Villeneuve hoisted his flag on board the Bucentaur, an imposing ceremony was preparing at Toulon. The remains of Latouche Tréville had been brought there, the officers of the squadron wishing that the ashes of their lamented chief should repose on the spot whence he had seen the enemy's ships sail off for the last time.* On the summit of Cape Sepet they raised a monument to his memory. His body was buried there; and Villeneuve, surrounded by a mournful crowd, pronounced over his tomb the following words: — "From these heights, which command the harbour and our ships, the shade of Latouche Tréville will inspire us in our enterprises; he will be ever present in the midst of us, and with our eyes turned towards his tomb, we shall feel ourselves imbued with that indefatigable zeal, that courage, at once prudent and intrepid — that love of glory and of his country, which, whilst they are objects of our eternal admiration and regret in him, must be also objects of our emulation. Sailors! they will be such to me. The successor of Latouche gives you this promise. Promise, on your part, that,

man," Collingwood wrote on the 12th Dec. 1805, "and, I believe, a very good officer: he has nothing in his manners of the offensive, vapouring, and boasting which we, perhaps, too often attribute to Frenchmen."

with the same claims, he shall receive from you the same fidelity and the same attachment."*

Spain, whence the emperor secretly received a yearly subsidy of forty-eight million francs, had not as yet engaged in the war. Shortly after the death of Latouche Tréville, an avaricious and unjustifiable aggression obliged her to abandon a neutrality so well suited to her weakness and our policy. On the 5th of October, 1804, four Spanish frigates, laden with considerable treasure, were intercepted before Cadiz by the frigate squadron of Captain Moore. Attacked by superior forces, Rear-Admiral Bustamente, who commanded the Spanish squadron, made a brave defence. A few minutes after the action had begun, the frigate Mercedes blew up, and made the odds against him greater still. The Medea, with the flag of Bustamente, the Clara, and the Fama, which fought on each side of her,

* Admiral Latouche enjoyed an immense reputation in our navy; and if we may accredit the recollections a living officer whose frigate carried his flag, it was deserved. These recollections confirm the testimony expressed by Admiral Villeneuve. That officer, of whom Latouche wrote, "To write you a panegyric of our brave and excellent admiral, would be carrying water to the river, or gold to the Pactolus," still preserves several friendly and familiar letters from Latouche Tréville. It is easy to recognise in these letters, traits of that character so well depicted by Villeneuve in his funeral oration, "The truthfulness of his character, the charms of his conversation, and the art of uniting pleasure and frank gaiety with the serious despatch of business."

were successively obliged to strike their colours to the razé line-of-battle ship, Indefatigable, and the frigates Medûsa, Amphion, and Lively. Spain answered this high-handed robbery by a declaration of war; but was not able to take the field till March, 1805.

At the moment when this new complication took place, which was coincident with the arrival of Villeneuve at Toulon, Nelson's force amounted to eleven ships: Villeneuve had also eleven; and whilst the preparations of Spain were beginning those of France were coming to an end. "The French ships," wrote Nelson, "are taking troops, saddles, and even horses on board, they say; and yet they remain in harbour. If I only knew their destination, and were sure to meet them, I should be a poor creature to doubt for a moment the issue of the encounter." As a substitute for fighting, the care of his squadron beguiled the tedium of a cruise which seemed destined never to end; the most indispensable repairs were managed at sea, and the frigates were employed in carrying to the fleet provisions of all kinds, taken from the coasts of Spain and Italy, and even sometimes from that of France. Thanks to the care and foresight of the admiral, the English fleet was clear of scurvy; after a sixteen months' cruise, during

which Nelson had remained almost entirely between Cape St. Sebastian and Sardinia, there was not one man ill out of 6000. "The object of the first importance in a squadron," said Nelson, "is the health of the men who compose it." It is interesting, and, at the same time, instructive, to see the attention which this great admiral bestowed upon the smallest details that could promote the comfort of his sailors. When the plan of an attack was in question, he contented himself with giving the general idea. "Signals are useless," said he, "amongst people disposed to do their duty: our principal object is to support one another mutually; to close with the enemy, and to keep to leeward of him, that he may not escape us." But when it was a question of the provisions sent to him from Malta, or the clothing of his men, his solicitude was by no means thus easily satisfied. It was necessary to his own satisfaction that he should himself point out the way in which the vegetables, pork, and beef were to be tested before they were received and distributed amongst the crews; and "those flannel shirts, which, being made five or six inches too short," exposed the men to sudden chills, were the subject seriously occupying his mind at the moment when Mr. Frere, the English ambassador at Madrid, wrote

him word that he was about to demand his passports and set out for London. "Because," said he, "these shirts, five or six inches longer, would be one of the best things yet introduced into the navy, and would, perhaps, save the lives of more than one good sailor." In common with the Duke of Wellington, Nelson, Englishman-like, never entertained a doubt respecting the patriotism of a soldier or a sailor who was well paid, well clothed, and well fed; and, therefore, when, in spite of all his care the men, tired of their secluded life, allowed themselves to be seduced by Spanish recruiting agents, his indignation could hardly find terms sufficiently contemptuous to vent upon such conduct. "When," he exclaimed, "I see English sailors degrade themselves so far as to leave in war-time the service of their country for that of Spain, *leaving their pay of a shilling a day, and abundance of provisions of the best description*, and all those advantages which their officers can insure to them, to go after a pay of two pence a-day, *black bread*, *horse-beans*, and *rancid oil* — when I see English sailors become Spanish soldiers I blush for them. If there is a thing that foreigners admire in us, it is assuredly our love of our country. How can those who desert her service dare to boast of their love for her?" These familiar letters,

filled with details, acquire an additional interest from the periods in which they were written. Beset by two squadrons, one of which was already fitted out at Toulon, and the other getting ready at Carthagena, Nelson saw in the union of Spain and France only *a rich and lucrative war* substituted *for a poor war; a war without profit and without prizes.* This formidable coalition only presented to his imagination another means of enlarging and beautifying his estate at Merton, and of putting by a little of that money which "he seldom spent upon himself, but liked to scatter round him;" but if "pleurisies and chest complaints, so prevalent in the Mediterranean," should befal his squadron, how should he repair his losses? This he dreaded more than the navy of Spain, and England had no sailors to send out to the Mediterranean ships. Nelson was authorised to recruit with Italian sailors; but Italians would desert as soon as they inhaled the air of Italy; Frenchmen could be had; but Frenchmen he would not tolerate on any pretext; "Give me *good Germans*," he said; but Germans were scarce. Besides these liberal doctrines held by the English Admiralty on the subject of recruiting require long cruises in order to become of practical utility, for it takes more than a few days to convert a good

ploughman into a good top-man; and Nelson himself had found that twenty months at sea were not too much to exercise and discipline his crews, originally composed of the most heterogeneous elements: but what cannot be effected by the salutary and daily labours of a life at sea under a good chief? There was not one, even to the black general, Joseph Chrestien, who, as a passenger, or, rather, prisoner, was found on board the French frigate Embuscade, when taken by the *Victory*, who in this rough school did not become, in the hands of Nelson, "*a perfect sailor*." The secret, therefore, of making a fleet efficient, is to place it under a good officer, and keep it constantly at sea, for it is there that it gains strength; and when the unfortunate Villeneuve, on quitting Toulon, said to his men, "There is nothing about an English fleet which should frighten you; their ships are worn out by a two years' blockade;" he involuntarily proclaimed the real cause of the decisive triumph those ships would one day obtain over him.

A first essay was destined to establish the immense difference which cannot but exist between a fleet inured to fatigue and another just escaped from the idleness of a port. On Jan. 19. 1805, Nelson was at anchor in Agincourt Roads, when two of his frigates, the Active and Sea-horse,

appeared at the entrance of the Straits of Bonifacio, under a press of sail, with the long-expected signal, "The Enemy is at sea." It was at three o'clock in the afternoon when they anchored near the Victory, and at half-past four the English fleet was under sail. It becomes dark there about five o'clock at that time of year: the wind was blowing strong from the westward, and the fleet could not work to windward against it, so that it was necessary to go through one of the eastern passages which open into the Tuscan Sea. Though it was now completely dark, Nelson took the lead in the Victory, and resolved to conduct his eleven ships of the line between the rocks of Biscia and the north-east extremity of Sardinia. This passage, whose breadth does not exceed a quarter of a mile, has never since been attempted by any fleet. The English squadron cleared it; formed in a single line ahead; each ship showing a light astern, to guide the one which followed.

The French fleet, when Nelson's frigate had last seen them, were steering to the south, with a strong breeze at north-west, and Nelson did not doubt but that they would steer for the southernmost point of Sardinia; and when he had cleared the outermost rocks of the Madalena isles, he bore up, and coasting down Sardinia, detached a frigate towards Cagliari and San

Pietro, in hopes of obtaining some information about Villeneuve's squadron. The weather was uncertain and threatening; the wind, which had been fresh in the passage, had become variable and uncertain, and Nelson, foreseeing a gale of wind, the squadron, before midnight, was under snug sail, with the higher yards and masts on deck. Attentive to the least signs of atmospheric changes, Nelson had great faith in the indications of the barometer, and his Journal contains observations of the greatest interest upon them, written daily with his own hand — a fact well worthy of remark! The impetuous admiral was more careful of his spars and sails, under ordinary circumstances, than of his ships or fleet even on great occasions: he was, besides, better acquainted than any body with the seas in which he then was. He knew with what sudden violence the heaviest gales commence in the Mediterranean, and expecting to meet the enemy, he did not wish to risk doing so with ships already disabled. The tempest which Nelson had foreseen, burst out next morning, and found the English squadron under close-reefed sails, ready to defy the fury of the squalls, which succeeded each other, without interruption, until the 23d January. Nelson, at that date, learned, through his frigates, that a French line-of-battle ship,

having lost two of her topmasts, had taken refuge in Ajaccio, and that a French frigate had appeared at the entrance of the bay of Cagliari. He thought, therefore, that their fleet had been dispersed by the storm, and wrote to the Admiralty: "One of two things must have happened: either the French fleet must have put back crippled, or they are gone to the eastward, probably to Egypt; therefore I find no difficulty in pursuing the line of conduct I have adopted. If the enemy have put back crippled, I could never overtake them, and therefore I could not do any harm in going to the eastward; and if the enemy are gone to the eastward, I am right. My future movements must be guided by such information as I may be able to obtain, and their lordships may rely that every exertion shall be used to find them out, and bring them to battle." On the 29th January the English squadron passed the Isle of Stromboli, beat through the Straits of Messina in spite of contrary winds, and some days later made the coast of Egypt. The French ships had not appeared before Alexandria, and on the 8th of February Nelson, in despair, retraced his steps to Malta and Toulon. "Nevertheless," he wrote again to the Admiralty*,

* Apparently from some other source, as this letter is not in the Nelson Despatches.—*Translator's note.*

"had I even known the injury sustained by one French ship, I could not forget the character of Buonaparte. I knew that, in the orders given by him on the banks of the Seine, neither wind nor weather would be considered, and, indeed, in my opinion, though there had been three or four French ships disabled, that was no reason for delaying an important expedition."

It was only on the 14th February, and when he was not more than a hundred leagues from Malta, that Nelson learned with certainty what had become of the French fleet. The Emperor Napoleon had not ventured to entrust Villeneuve with the hazardous plan he had formed for Latouche Tréville. This time he purposed sending the Brest fleet, under Admiral Gantheaume, into the Channel. To divide the attention of the English ships, and draw them off from our coasts, he had resolved to send two squadrons to the West Indies. Rear-Admiral Missiessy had sailed from Rochefort on the 11th January, and Villeneuve from Toulon on the 18th. After having met with bad weather for thirteen days in the Bay of Biscay, Admiral Missiessy had been able to continue his voyage. Villeneuve, who always imagined that Nelson was at his heels, showed less perseverance. He had met with serious injury, and had lost sight of the Indomptable, line-

of-battle ship and three of his frigates since the first night, and had hurried back into port. "These gentlemen," wrote Nelson to Lord Melville, "are not accustomed to those storms which we have battled with for one-and-twenty months without losing a mast or yard." This want of sea practice was, in fact, the great evil of our navy. Villeneuve, already discouraged by this first attempt, complained of it with bitterness. In a letter to Admiral Décrès he said, "The Toulon squadron looked very well at anchor, with the crews well dressed and going through their exercise well; but when the storm came things were very different; *they were not exercised for storms.* The few sailors mixed up with the soldiers were no longer to be found, while the latter could not stand on the decks, and only encumbered them. It was impossible to work the ship, and hence the yards carried away and the sails split, for in all the damages incurred there was as much clumsiness and inexperience as defectiveness in the articles supplied by the dockyards." Such were the scenes of confusion which often marked the commencement of any expedition by our squadrons. At the beginning of the war, England at once assumed the offensive. Her ships were before our ports, before our own were in a condition to leave them. Each day

rendered the enemy stronger, and diminished our confidence. And instead of sailing in spite of the English squadrons, even engaging them if necessary, we preferred waiting until a gale of wind obliged them to raise the blockade. We then sailed under cover of a storm, and more than once that storm left the enemy nothing to do.*

After his expedition to Alexandria, Nelson was detained off the southern coast of Sardinia by a long continuance of westerly winds, and it was only on the 12th of March that he made the coast of Provence. On the 15th he again took up his station off Cape Saint Sebastian; but,

* The Emperor had only two years of imperfect truce to prepare for these unhappy expeditions; but that which could not without injustice be expected from his unquiet reign, may it not be looked for in a government acting under ordinary circumstances? If we would have a navy, it has to be created out of the materials at hand, and be produced not from the natural resources of the country, as it might be with a commercial people, but emanate from a great political idea, the only source in a military nation. There is but one way to avoid the danger of being half-conquered before the first battle:—that way is, to be both active and provident; to keep line-of-battle ships ready to be manned at the first signal, and to threaten the enemy's coasts before he can blockade ours.

The sensible advice conveyed in the above note is not neglected in France; for preparations *are* made with a view to energetic action at the first outbreak of war, and should her efforts be directed against this country, the *disarming* policy recommended to us by Mr. Cobden will afford our neighbours all the assistance they could desire.—*Translator's note.*

after having left the Leviathan before Barcelona in order to inspire Villeneuve with false security under the belief that he had resumed his cruising ground on the coast of Spain, he rapidly sailed back to Sardinia; and on the 27th of March anchored in the Bay of Palmas, where several transports laden with provisions awaited him. Nelson did not doubt that Villeneuve would put to sea again as soon as his ships had repaired damages, and being resolved to pursue him even to the Antipodes, he wished to complete his supply of water, and to take in five months' provisions for his ships. Writing to Collingwood he said, "Buonaparte has often boasted that our fleet would wear itself out at sea; that his was kept in order, and increased by staying in port; but he now finds, I fancy, if *Emperors* hear truth, that his fleet suffers more in one night than ours in one year." The ships which had parted from the French squadron on the night after its departure had already rejoined Admiral Villeneuve. The Cornélie had returned to Toulon on the 22d of January; the Indomptable on the 24th; the Hortense and Incorruptible frigates, which had first made for the Straits of Gibraltar, the first rendezvous appointed in case of separation, had also returned after capturing the English corvettes, Arrow and Acheron. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve was therefore ready to sail

again; but he wished to turn his stay to account to effect some changes in his squadron. The Incorruptible frigate ceased to form a part of the force. The Uranie was changed for the Hermione, and, instead of the Annibal, Captain Cosmao took command of the Pluton, a seventy-four, just launched. Two months were lost in these preparations, and the Emperor was obliged to modify his first projects. Following the natural bent of his genius, he had still farther expanded his plans. This time Villeneuve was to present himself before Cadiz to pick up the Aigle line-of-battle ship, and the Spanish squadron commanded by Admiral Gravina. With this reinforcement he was to proceed to the West Indies, where he would be rejoined by Gantheaume's twenty-one ships, and thence to return steering for Boulogne, with the object of protecting the passage of the flotilla with fifty sail of the line. The division which he commanded, composed of eléven line-of-battle ships and six frigates, was destined to form the nucleus round which the separate squadrons, then blockaded by the English, were to gather.

On the 29th of March, Admiral Villeneuve sailed a second time from Toulon with a fine breeze from north-east, and steered with the wind aft between Sardinia and the Balearic Isles. Next morning the wind shifted to north-west;

but instead of freshening as might have been expected, it died away considerably, and for two days our squadron made but very little progress. On the evening of the 31st, it was still but ten or twelve leagues from Cape Sicie, where it was discovered by the English frigates, Active and Phœbe. The Phœbe bore up for the Gulf of Palmas in search of Nelson. The Active endeavoured to keep sight of our ships, but during the night she lost them. Next morning Villeneuve learnt from a Ragusan ship, that the English fleet, five days before, was seen beating up to the southward of Sardinia; feeling assured, therefore, of meeting no enemy to the northward of the Balearic Islands, he hauled his wind, closed with the coast of Spain, and on the 6th of April found himself in sight of Carthagena. Nelson having learnt the sailing of our squadron, was vainly waiting for it between Sardinia and the coast of Africa. "I am completely astray," he wrote in despair, "from the want of my frigates, which lost sight of the enemy on their leaving Toulon; but there is no use in anger or complaint." It was not until the 10th of April, while keeping off the Island of Ustica, ready to succour either Naples or Sicily, that he began to suspect the route which our squadron had taken. A letter from the English Minister at Naples

informed him that a body of troops under the orders of General Craig, escorted by Rear-Admiral Knight, was to have left England for the Mediterranean. This important expedition might have been intercepted by Villeneuve, and Nelson no longer hesitated to steer for the Straits to protect it. While struggling against the constant westerly gales, he learnt on the 16th of April from a neutral ship, that the French squadron had been seen off Cape de Gata. "If this news is true," Nelson wrote to Naples, "I dread to think how much mischief the enemy may have done us." On the 7th of April, in fact, the French squadron had already passed Carthagena, where Rear-Admiral Salcedo commanded six Spanish ships in the harbour. Villeneuve wished them to join his squadron; but as Salcedo asked for thirty-six hours to take in his powder *, and a fair wind had sprung up, he determined not to wait. He therefore continued his voyage, and on the 9th of April entered the Straits of Gibraltar. That same evening, driving Vice-Admiral Orde and the five English ships which blockaded Cadiz before him, he anchored at the entrance of that harbour, in order to effect his junction with Admiral Gravina. Admiral

* Letter from General Beurnonville to Admiral Décrès.

Gravina was born at Naples, and Charles III., whose natural son he was supposed to be, made him enter the navy, and sent him to fight the Algerines. In 1793 Gravina served under the orders of Admiral Langara, and took part in the defence of Toulon and Rosas, which services gained him the rank of Rear-Admiral, and the reputation of a brave officer. Being appointed ambassador by the Court of Madrid, he came to Paris in 1805, and pleased Napoleon so much, that he selected him for the command of the Spanish fleet. People did not approach the French Emperor with impunity; Gravina, who was fifty-eight years of age, veiled under great simplicity of manner an exalted and chivalrous character. He was completely fascinated by Buonaparte, and without considering the state of a dilapidated navy, promised to follow the French fleet every where and in every undertaking.* On the 3d of April, full of ardour and longing for more active service, he hoisted his flag in the line-of-battle ship Argonauta, anchored in the roads of Cadiz. Spain then possessed sixteen ships of the line in that port; but the complete emptiness of the arsenals, and the ravages which the yellow fever had made in the

* Letter of Admiral Gravina to Admiral Décrès.

maritime districts, had counteracted the good-will of the Spanish cabinet, and the indefatigable zeal of our ambassador, General Beurnonville. At the end of three months, by using every expedient, they succeeded in fitting out six ships, two of them 64's, *the most wretched ships, except the Argonauta, ever sent to sea.** To make up the crews of this squadron, it was necessary to have recourse to impressment, and even by those means, as General Beurnonville himself declared, they had only collected a *sorry lot.*† The officers, it is true, appointed to these ill-manned ships, were for the most part brave and experienced, and devoted to their Admiral; but it was not devoted officers which the Spanish navy had been deficient in, since the commencement of the war. Heroic defences had reflected honour on the flag of Charles IV., but no successful resistance had made it formidable to the enemy.

A very recent example, however, should have opened our eyes to the danger of inviting the assistance of such auxiliaries. On the 6th of July, 1801, shortly before the peace of Amiens, three French ships, protected by two weak batteries, and a position ably selected, had before

* Letter of Admiral Villeneuve to Admiral Décrès.

† Letter of General Beurnonville to Admiral Décrès.

Algesiras, fought six English ships with advantage.* Some days after that battle, in which the Hannibal line-of-battle ship remained in our power, a squadron of five Spanish ships, and one given up to the French (the San Antonio), hastily manned, came out of Cadiz, and Admiral Linois commanding our squadron, sailed with this reinforcement. Sir James Saumarez, whom Linois had just beaten, sailed also to pursue them. The nine ships of the allies fled before five English, and one of the best battles of our navy was suc-

* The battle so modestly related here did great honour to the French navy, though it is neither true nor *possible* that three French ships beat six English, *as M. Thiers tells the story.* The simple facts of the matter are, that the French ships being in their own harbour, could take up the "position ably selected," which M. de la Graviere refers to, where the rocks and shoals (on which the Hannibal remained aground) were their best protection. Many a paltry privateer has escaped a line-of-battle ship under the same circumstances; yet few historians would have ventured to assert that the privateers gained a victory over the line-of-battle ship, except in as far as an escape was a victory. M. Thiers, to improve the story, sums up,—"Such was the battle of Algesiras, where three French ships fought six English, destroyed *two* of them, and of these two kept one." While he was about it, it was just as well to double the real loss sustained by the British; but, unfortunately for M. Thiers' veracity, there were other accounts of the battle besides his own. Those, however, who think that one French ship is equal to two British, may adopt the version given in the "Consulat et l'Empire," and those who see in the whole history of the war any reason to doubt such a proposition, may adopt either the British or Spanish account. — *Translator's note.*

ceeded by a frightful disaster. The San Antonio being surrounded, was forced to surrender. Two Spanish three-deckers were attacked at midnight by a single English 74, and a panic seized their crews. The two three-deckers took fire, and after cannonading each other, blew up with the loss of 2000 men from this double suicide. As to the French ships, scarcely refitted after the battle of Algesiras, they repulsed the enemy gloriously, and entered Cadiz next day covered with glory, but horrified at a success for which their faithful and generous allies had paid so dearly.

Such were the recollections which agitated Villeneuve at the sight of the Cadiz squadron, though if any thing could have neutralised them it would have been the zeal with which Admiral Gravina hastened to join him, and the sincerity displayed by that officer in his conduct and bravery. As soon as the Hortense, sent in advance by Admiral Villeneuve, had telegraphed the approach of the French fleet, the captain of the Aigle, ready to make sail himself, sent the dispatches of Admiral Décrès, and seven sealed packets, containing the rendezvous in case of separation, to the Spanish Admiral. Gravina distributed these packets among his captains, with express orders not to open them until at

sea; then hastily embarking 1600 soldiers, he made signal to his ships to slip their cables, and re-anchored before Rota, in the midst of the French squadron. At two, next morning, the combined fleet took advantage of a light land breeze to get under weigh. The San Rafael had touched the ground coming out of harbour; the other ships, which had already left one anchor and cable at Cadiz, wished to weigh their anchors, and lost much time in the operation. At daybreak they had parted company from the squadron, the Argonauta, 80, and the America, 64, only remaining with Villeneuve, who had thus under his orders, besides six frigates, one corvette, and three brigs, twelve French and two Spanish line-of-battle ships. The San Rafael, of 80 guns, the Firme and Terrible, of 74, the España, 64, and the Santa Madalena frigate were left behind, and the captains of those ships, opening their sealed packets, steered for Martinique.

Nelson, meantime, was still contending against westerly winds, and only reached the entrance of the Straits on the 30th of April. There he was obliged to anchor, for the strong current which always sets into the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, makes it impossible to work through the Gut of Gibraltar with contrary winds, which

prompted him to write to Captain Ball, "My fortune seems to have abandoned me. I can neither get a fair nor a leading wind; it is always dead foul, dead foul!" While at anchor in the Bay of Tetuan, more agitated than the Greeks at Aulis, he watched with anxiety for the first favourable breeze, and tried to divert his ardent mind with a thousand plans of operations. We find him writing to Mr. Addington, "I have been severely tried, and, until now, the enemy has been marvellously lucky; but fortune may change; patience and perseverance can do a great deal." At last, on the 7th of May, at six in the evening, he got through the Straits of Gibraltar, still ignorant of the combined fleet's destination, which he only learnt with certainty by an unexpected piece of intelligence. A Portuguese officer, of Scotch origin, Rear-Admiral Donald Campbell, who had formed part of the Marquis de Niza's squadron, and served under his orders at Naples, met the English fleet at sea. He had heard the rumours current at Cadiz, and told Nelson that Villeneuve's fleet had gone to the West Indies. Nelson cursed the foul winds which had detained him in the Mediterranean more heartily than ever. The squadron, on its way to carry terror and desolation to the English colonies, was that which the Admiralty had appointed him to watch

—that which his eyes had gloated on for two years, and which he had so proudly called *his* fleet. He resolved, at all risks, to follow it even to the tropics. However ready to incur personal responsibility in this pursuit, Nelson wished, nevertheless, before quitting the shores of Europe, to insure the safety of the 5000 troops which Rear-Admiral Knight was bringing from England. On the 10th of May he anchored in the Bay of Lagos with his squadron, found there some transports abandoned by Sir John Orde, in his retreat from Villeneuve, and in a single night took in above a month's provisions for all his ships. Next morning he sailed again, and reached Cape St. Vincent. On the 12th of May, in the afternoon, the same day that Villeneuve gained sight of Martinique, Nelson fell in with the important convoy which Rear-Admiral Knight had escorted with two ships, the *Queen*, 98, and the *Dragon*, 74. This convoy, therefore, had escaped the dangers apprehended by Nelson, but entering the Mediterranean, it might still meet Admiral Salcedo. Though about to give chace with only eleven ships to the enemy's fleet composed of eighteen, Nelson preferred weakening himself to leaving an English Admiral exposed to meet the Carthagena squadron with an insufficient force. One of his ships,

whose copper had not been renewed for six years, the Royal Sovereign, three-decker, would have retarded him in the voyage by its inferior sailing. He did not fear to deprive himself of that ship, but gave her to the squadron of Admiral Orde. But whatever might have been the rashness which Nelson loved to display in presence of the enemy, he did not propose attacking the combined fleet this time until he should be joined by Rear-Admiral Cochrane. He expected to find that officer at Barbadoes, with six ships detached from the blockading force off Ferrol, in pursuit of five ships under Admiral Missiessy. The French could not assemble more than twenty-three ships of the line, all included, in the West Indies. Nelson expected to have sixteen, all tried ships, practised in the same tactics, and bearing the same flag. It was a chance which such a man as Nelson might well accept. "Let each of you," he used to say to his captains, "attack a French ship; I will take charge of the Spaniards, and when I strike my flag I give you leave to do the same." If Nelson felt himself safe in spite of the numerical superiority of the enemy, he was not insensible to the ridicule which might attach to an unsuccessful pursuit. "Under the most serious consideration which I can give from all I hear," he wrote to the Secre-

tary of the Admiralty, "I rather think that the West Indies must be the destination of the combined squadrons. A run to England would have been far more agreeable, and more necessary for my state of health; but I put myself out of the question upon these occasions: and although it may be said I am unlucky, it never shall be said that I am inactive or sparing of myself. And surely it will not be fancied I am on a party of pleasure, running after eighteen sail of the line with ten, and that to the West Indies. However, I know that patience and perseverance will do much, and if they are not there the squadron will be again off Cadiz by the end of June, in short, before the enemy can know where I am gone to." Too much time had been already lost to allow Nelson to lose more by hesitation. On the 11th of May, obeying one of the noblest impulses which illustrated his career, he parted from Rear-Admiral Knight, and flew to the succour of the threatened West India Islands.

Every thing, up to that time, had favoured Napoleon's projects. Notwithstanding the inferior sailing of three ships (the Formidable and Intrepid, always forced to carry a press of sail, and the Atlas, which was obliged to be taken in tow by the Neptune), Villeneuve had passed through the Straits a month before the English

Admiral. On the 13th of May he anchored at Martinique, and found the ships which had separated from him on leaving Cadiz in the harbour of Fort Royal. Eighteen sail of the line and seven frigates were therefore assembled under his orders, and the first proof by which he was able to test the zeal of his crews was crowned with complete success. The English had fortified an uninhabited rock, called the Diamond, at the entrance of Fort Royal harbour. That position, which had become the depôt and place of refuge of their privateers, was considered impregnable; but the boats of the squadron, supported by the fire of two line-of-battle ships and a frigate, took possession of it on the 31st of May. In the generous rivalry which took place on this occasion between the French and Spanish seamen, the first boat which reached the shore under a shower of musket balls and grape shot, was one of Admiral Gravina's. This unequivocal proof of the excellent spirit which animated our allies, restored the confidence of Villeneuve, and had he not feared that he might miss Admiral Gantheaume by doing so, he would have yielded to Admiral Gravina's wishes to retake Trinidad, a Spanish colony, ceded to England by the treaty of Amiens; but while Villeneuve explained to his colleague the imperative reasons which detained

him at Martinique, new orders were on the point of reaching him.

The idea of assembling our squadrons in the West Indies, in order to direct them from thence into the British Channel, was a conception of Napoleon's genius which might well baffle the foresight of the English Admiralty. Unhappily for France, this imposing concentration of force, requiring to be effected by surprise, a concurrence of circumstances rarely met with in maritime operations was necessary to its success. The time lost by Admiral Villeneuve at Toulon had, before this, prevented his junction with Rear-Admiral Missiessy, who was recalled from the West Indies to Europe, and the obstinacy with which Cornwallis maintained the blockade of Brest throughout the month of April, which this year was provokingly calm, did not allow Gantheaume a single day on which he could leave Brest without a battle. On the 1st of May, Rear-Admiral Magon sailed from Rochfort with two ships, to convey this unfavourable intelligence to the combined fleet. If Admiral Gantheaume had not appeared in the West Indies, Villeneuve was to return off Ferrol, where as yet there were but eleven ships of the line ready for sea, but where Buonaparte hoped that Villeneuve would find fifteen on his arrival. By sailing im-

mediately for Brest with the thirty-five ships thus assembled, it was not doubtful that he might effect a junction with Admiral Gantheaume, notwithstanding the eighteen ships under Cornwallis. "On your success in arriving before Boulogne," wrote Admiral Décrès to Villeneuve, "the destiny of the world depends; happy the admiral who shall have the glory of so memorable an event attached to his name."

The combined fleet was to wait for Admiral Gantheaume's squadron until the 21st of June. It was, however, very probable that Gantheaume would not get out of Brest until the blockade was raised; the inaction of Villeneuve was, therefore, unnecessary. In order that this Admiral's expedition should not be entirely fruitless, Napoleon, in sending him new orders, directed him to attempt a surprise upon some of the English islands, Trinidad especially, which he would have much liked to restore to Spain; but time had advanced, the English Admiralty had doubtless not remained passive, and Villeneuve thought it dangerous to get his squadron so far to leeward. Instead of attacking Trinidad, he preferred acting against Barbadoes, whence it would always be in his power to return to Fort Royal.

On the 4th of June he sailed from Martinique,

and the same day, almost at the same hour, Nelson's squadron anchored in Carlisle Bay, at Barbadoes. This squadron had, in twenty-three days, crossed that wide waste of waters which had cost the combined fleet thirty. At Barbadoes Nelson only found two 74's, under Rear-Admiral Cochrane, Admiral Décrès having kept the four others at Jamaica. His squadron, therefore, only amounted to twelve sail of the line at the moment the two ships under Rear-Admiral Magon had swelled that of Villeneuve to twenty, and seven frigates. The exact amount of our West India fleet was not then known at Barbadoes, but Nelson had come from too great a distance to be easily deterred, and rejoicing to feel himself so near the enemy, he only asked the course he must follow in order to overtake them. He was told to steer for Tobago and Trinidad. Although himself of a contrary opinion, he thought it right to submit to the general belief, and embarking 2000 troops on board his ships in the night, sailed, on the 5th of June, for Trinidad. The two fleets thus followed contrary courses; the trade winds drove the English squadron rapidly southward, whilst the combined fleet, after embarking fresh troops at Guadaloupe, were making their way for the straits between Antigua

and Montserrat, and were already thirty leagues to the northward of Martinique.

At daybreak on the 7th of June, the English squadron, all cleared for action, doubled the island of Trinidad, and entered into the great Bay of Paria, formed by the American continent at one of the mouths of the Orinoco. On seeing this anchorage deserted, Nelson wished to retrace his steps, but a calm obliged him to anchor until the morning. On the 8th, at the moment of leaving the bay, he learnt the capitulation of the Diamond Rock. The officer who commanded that fortified post, wrote to him on the 2d of June, that the combined fleet was still at Martinique, and had been joined, according to the report of French officers, by fourteen ships from Ferrol. Nelson thought this last intelligence highly improbable, and wrote to the Governor of Barbadoes, "In any case, whatever be the force of the combined fleet, it shall not do you much harm with impunity. My squadron is compact and manageable, which the enemy's cannot be." Basing his confidence in the incontestable superiority of his ships, Nelson thought of nothing, at this critical moment, but approaching the scene of operations. The false information which he had received at Barbadoes had taken him above sixty leagues to leeward of

that island; and during this time Villeneuve, spreading terror everywhere in his route, captured a convoy of fifteen vessels from St. Kitts. Having arrived off Grenada, Nelson received more certain intelligence of the combined fleet. The look-outs at Dominica had counted, on the 6th of June, eighteen ships of the line and six frigates, standing to the northward. Nelson again indulged the hope of overtaking the enemy; but Villeneuve had learnt from his prisoners the arrival of an English squadron in the West Indies; and at the moment when Nelson appeared before Antigua, the combined fleet was three days' sail on its return to Europe.

Nelson learnt the departure of the allies on the 12th of June, and in a few hours had landed the troops, ordered Rear-Admiral Cochrane to remain in the West Indies with the Northumberland, and resumed his indefatigable pursuit with eleven ships. He and Villeneuve were once more to follow diverging courses, Villeneuve steering for Ferrol, and Nelson for Cape St. Vincent and Cadiz. The latter had not even suspected Napoleon's plans, but thought that the combined fleet had gone to the West Indies to burn convoys, or lay waste the islands; and that project having failed, he did not doubt that they would seek a new scene of operations in the Me-

diterranean. Under this impression he wrote, on the 18th of June, to the minister, Sir John Acton, at that time at Palermo:—My dear Sir John,—I am now 200 leagues from Antigua, on my way to the Straits of Gibraltar. I have not yet met the enemy, but do not fear my letting him get the upper hand in the Mediterranean, to disturb Sicily or the other states of your good king." At the moment, however, when he wrote this letter, Nelson was very near the combined fleet; for the next day, the 19th of June, the Curieux brig, commanded by Captain Bettesworth, which he had just despatched to England, to inform the Admiralty of his return, met the fleet which Nelson had vainly sought for three months, at 300 leagues distance N.N.E. of Antigua. By the course which Villeneuve was steering, it was easy to judge that he did not intend returning to the Mediterranean. Captain Bettesworth felt the importance of this fortunate discovery, and instead of returning to Nelson, whom he might have missed, he continued his course under a press of sail. When sixty leagues distant from Cape Finisterre, the combined fleet was delayed by contrary winds, and the Curieux reached the port of Plymouth. On the 9th of July, at daybreak, Captain Bettesworth was received by Lord Barham, who had succeeded Viscount Melville

at the Admiralty. At that time, thirty-six sail of the line, extending from Cadiz to Brest, could not successfully guard such an extent of coast against a complete fleet of twenty sail of the line. A prompt resolution was, therefore, necessary, and Lord Barham did not hesitate. He immediately ordered Cornwallis, who was cruising before Brest, to raise the blockade of Rochefort and Ferrol, and thus to form a squadron of fifteen sail of the line for Admiral Calder, who with that force was to proceed off Cape Finisterre to meet Admiral Villeneuve. Ships were waiting at Portsmouth and Plymouth for the despatches of the Admiralty, *and eight days after the arrival of the Curieux in England, the orders of Lord Barham had been executed.* On the 15th of July, Admiral Stirling's five ships joined the ten under Vice-Admiral Calder off Ferrol; while Villeneuve's fleet, still detained by north-easterly winds, lost ground every day rather than gained it. Meanwhile Nelson confidently pursued his course towards Gibraltar, and arriving there on the 18th of July, he learnt with astonishment that no enemy's ship had passed through the Straits. What, then, had become of the fleet which he pursued? Had he preceded it to Europe, as he formerly had Bruix's fleet to

Egypt; or had Villeneuve, deceiving him by a false movement, suddenly turned on Jamaica, while his pursuer thought him in the midst of the Atlantic, crowding sail for Cadiz? In any case Nelson was forced to make some delay, to procure water and provisions, and some refreshment for his crews, who were beginning to suffer from scurvy. He determined to anchor at Gibraltar, and on the 20th of July landed to visit the governor. He had not then *put his foot on shore for more than two years*. A letter which he received from Collingwood, then cruising off Cadiz, soon came to allay his anxiety. Gifted with rare sagacity, Collingwood had appreciated all the importance of Villeneuve's operations, and was the first to discover a clue to that expedition. "The French government," he wrote to his friend, "never aim at little things while great objects are in view: I have considered the invasion of Ireland as the real mark and butt of all their operations: their flight to the West Indies was to take off the naval force which proved the great impediment to their undertaking." Had Collingwood thought of the flotilla assembled at Boulogne, he would have considered the danger still more pressing, and would have admitted that the combined fleet, once in possession of the Bay of Biscay and the entrance of the Channel, the invasion of England

was perhaps less difficult than that of Ireland. While a vague anxiety kept the public mind in suspense on both sides of the Channel, Calder and Villeneuve encountered each other fifty leagues off Cape Finisterre. On the 22d of July they engaged; and Calder, favoured by the fog, captured two Spanish ships from us, the Firme and San Rafael. The two admirals having been separated by nightfall, showed next day the same indecision and unwillingness to renew the battle. Calder, whom Collingwood has described to us as overwhelmed with anxiety off Ferrol, and bound down like Villeneuve by the weight of his responsibility, misconceived his duty under the circumstances. Contented with a trifling advantage, he left our fleet unmolested in its operations, and forebore to oppose a junction which he was ordered to prevent. As for Villeneuve, still less than Calder, should he have been satisfied with this first attempt. His crews showed themselves full of ardour, and had fought with an enthusiasm and gallantry which recalled the best days of our navy. The English hesitated, and remained on the defensive.* Never was

* The French author has forgotten the force on the French side, which would, perhaps, have explained Admiral Calder's backwardness and the "enthusiasm" of the French sailors. Calder had fifteen, Villeneuve twenty, ships. — *Translator's note.*

there a fairer chance of victory offered to an admiral. That chance Villeneuve might, perhaps, have seized, but for those fatal views which for twenty years have opened the door to so much hesitation: he sacrificed it to the hope of fulfilling his mission. Until the 25th of July, he strove to reach Ferrol; but, after three days of useless efforts, he bore up for Vigo, and entered that port to repair his damages. The first step was gained: Villeneuve's fleet had returned from the West Indies to Europe. From Vigo Villeneuve wrote to Admiral Décrès: "If, as I had reason to hope, I had made a quick passage from Martinique to Ferrol, had found Admiral Calder with six ships, or at most nine, and beat him, and, after having joined the combined squadron, having still provisions and water for six weeks, I had effected a junction at Brest, and cleared the road for the grand expedition, I should be the first man in France. Well! all that *should* have happened: I do not say with a squadron of fast sailers, but with very ordinary ships. I have encountered nineteen days of contrary winds; the Spanish division and the Atlas obliged me to bear up every morning as much as four leagues, though the greater part of my ships scarcely carried any sail through the night. Two gales from the north-east have done us some

damage, because we had bad masts, bad sails, bad rigging, bad officers, and bad sailors. Our crews fell sick, the enemy had received information of us, he was reinforced, and ventured to attack us with forces, numerically, very inferior. The weather favoured him; unaccustomed to battles and fleet manœuvres, each captain during the fog had no other idea than that of following his second ahead, and here we are the laughing stock of Europe." The complaints of Admiral Villeneuve were partly well founded. Unhappily, the clear sightedness of an irresolute man is generally worth less in the business of this world than the blindness of an energetic man. If Villeneuve, convinced that bad ships are only an embarrassment, had taken upon himself to forward the designs of Napoleon at the risk of incurring his displeasure, if he had left the Spanish division, except the Argonauta, at the Havannah, he might probably have engaged Calder with advantage off Ferrol.* But these complaints, which did no good,—that discouragement, which, far from showing the confidence of enlightened conviction, seemed always ready to belie itself,—

* This is not so clear, unless the French writer means that some other ships would have taken the place of the six Spanish ships, which formed part of Villeneuve's force. He can hardly mean to say that had Villeneuve had but fourteen ships, he would have done better than he did with twenty.—*Translator's note.*

those transitory impulses followed by instant reaction,—that unalterable courage and honour in conjunction with that childish despondency,—all this pointed out the man whose doom the hand of fate had sealed.

Our squadron turned their stay at Vigo to good account, to take in water and fresh provisions, and actively prepared for sea. Nelson, still more active, had anchored at Tetuan on the 22d of July, and sailed again on the 23d to join the fleet under Cornwallis; and the north-east winds which detained him off Cape St. Vincent, brought back Calder at the same time to Ferrol. Villeneuve was thus placed between two English squadrons. He left one French ship, the Atlas, at Vigo, to repair the injuries she had received on the 22d of July; as also two Spanish ships, the America and España, which were the worst sailers of the squadron, and wisely seized upon the favourable moment to pass between the enemy's forces, of which he received intelligence on all sides. A strong south-west wind drove Calder off the coast, and carried our fleet from the Bay of Vigo to the anchorage of Coruña, where a part entered Ferrol, and joined five French and ten Spanish ships. "That junction" rejoiced the brave Admiral Gravina, who wrote to Admiral Décrès,—"When the enemy's fleet of

fourteen-sail of the line approaches Ferrol with the first easterly wind, it will be not a little astonished. . . . The voyage from Cape Finisterre to this port, beset by a considerable English force, was difficult and dangerous; but my respected colleague undertook the task, and has executed it with much tact, wisdom, and *bravery*. . . . He has succeeded admirably." This sincere friendship tranquillised Villeneuve's mind, and consoled him for the sinister reports which frequently reached his ear. He thus expressed himself to Décrès: "I can but congratulate myself on Admiral Gravina's good opinion: he alone appreciates my position, and shows himself a true friend." General Lauriston, sent with him to sustain his confidence, seemed, on the contrary, only to aggravate his despondency. That ardent aide-de-camp of Napoleon, full of fire and energy, and devoted to the success of the operations with whose secret purpose he was acquainted, could not help lamenting the discouragement of Villeneuve. Villeneuve, on his part, soured by the disappointments of his expedition, loudly accused Lauriston of misconceiving difficulties which he was incapable of appreciating.

In this frame of mind the French Admiral reached Corunna. Notwithstanding some faults, and in spite of the ill concealed anxiety which

preyed upon him, he had so far fulfilled the intentions of the Emperor. Twenty-nine French and Spanish ships of the line were assembled under his flag. It only remained for him to reach Brest; but that was to penetrate through the thick of the English squadrons; and Villeneuve, at the decisive moment, felt his courage unequal to the task, and wrote to Admiral Décrès on the 11th of August: "Consider, Monseigneur, all my sources of anxiety. I am putting to sea with two ships, the Achille and Algesiras, both infested by sickness: the Indomptable is no better, and has, moreover, lost some men from desertion. I am threatened with the junction of Calder and Nelson. . . . Our forces, which ought to consist of thirty-four sail of the line, will be, at most, twenty-eight or twenty-nine. While the enemy, more concentrated than ever, *leaves me no choice but to gain Cadiz.*"

Notwithstanding the formidable coalition which Pitt was organising at this moment against France, Napoleon still expected Villeneuve. Which of us in the present day has not shared the emotions of that glorious attempt? Which of us, while the illustrious historian* of that great epoch kept us in suspense by the interest of his narrative, has not followed in fancy that eager

* Thiers.

gaze turned towards the West, and has not for a moment seen the horizon whiten with those fifty sails which bore the destinies of the world? "Sail," wrote the Emperor to Villeneuve, "150,000 men, with every thing complete, are embarked at Boulogne, Etaples, Vimereux, and Ambleteuse, in 2000 vessels of the flotilla, which, despite of the English cruisers, form one continued line in every anchorage from Etaples to Cape Grisnez. Your voyage alone makes us masters of England without a chance of failure." * Villeneuve, with a generous mind, but apathetic disposition, little ambitious of that great glory which prolongs the memory of a man through all ages †, could soar to the most devoted heroism, if his courage was suspected; but nothing would have

* When Buonaparte made this boastful and insulting speech he knew less of English soldiers than it was his misfortune to know at a later period. Had he landed in England when, as in 1805, the whole island was prepared to receive the foe, he would have anticipated the fate which befel him in 1815. Would that we could look with the same confidence to the future; but who can tell to what extent the proud spirit of England may be debased and demoralized by money-worship? We would rather have seen Buonaparte's host of 150,000 men landed in 1805, than an invasion of 20,000 in 1848. At the former period there was not *Qa ira* even, in the empire, who would not have taken up arms to resist the invader, or who would not have blushed at the idea, now propounded at public meetings, that we should rather rely on French forbearance for our national security than on British valour. — *Translator's note.*

† The First Consul to General Decaen, March, 1803.

aroused within him that ardent confidence of success which Napoleon required. Perhaps he, too, inconsiderately, undertook a difficult enterprise; and to pause before the dangers of the voyage, was to compromise its success. Villeneuve, with anxious glance, was always anticipating disasters: "a coward in head, but not in heart:"* like the illustrious admiral who fought the battle of La Hogue, he marched tremblingly forward along the narrow path which in his eye terminated rather in the sacrifice of a reviving navy than in the conquest of a kingdom. His inward conviction condemned this imprudence, and he felt anxious for his country's fate.

Gravina, though less impressed by a sense of danger, and always ready to sacrifice himself, was nevertheless of Villeneuve's opinion. That brave admiral wrote to Décrès, on the 3d of August, 1805,—"I am very grateful for the confidence and distinction with which his Imperial Majesty is pleased to honour me. The plan of operations which you have imparted to me could not have been better conceived. It was divine! but it is now sixty days since we left Martinique. The English have had time to reinforce their squadron off Ferrol; all that, in my opinion, may disconcert so excellent a plan. The enemy

* It is thus that Seignelai designates Marshal Tourville.

now knows our force; the season favours him; and on sailing hence we must expect to be attacked. After the battle the enemy will despatch ships to warn the Brest squadron, and will hang upon us and watch us, with a view to forcing us into another battle before we can approach Brest; thus the plan of operations will be defeated. That plan, no doubt, would have succeeded, had we reached Ferrol earlier; at the same time I have informed Admiral Villeneuve that I am ready to sail at the first signal." While Villeneuve was still hesitating as to the route he should pursue, the enemy's squadrons were in motion on all points of the Bay (of Biscay). Rear-Admiral Stirling, recalled off Rochfort, found that port empty. Admiral Missiessy's squadron, then commanded by Captain Lallemand, had sailed thence some days before, and was endeavouring to effect a junction with Villeneuve. Calder, who retained but nine ships, sent to reconnoitre Ferrol and Corunna on the 9th of August; and Captain Durham counted there twenty-nine enemy's ships of the line, and rejoined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant on the 14th of August. Next day Nelson arrived also with ten ships, left eight of them before Brest, and sailed for Portsmouth with the Superb and Victory. Had the combined fleet been aug-

mented by Captain Lallemand's division even, it would not have outnumbered the force under Cornwallis at this moment; but by an excess of confidence, or nervous anxiety (by a signal piece of folly Napoleon called it), Cornwallis divided his fleet into two nearly equal parts. Of his thirty-five ships he kept seventeen to watch Gantheaume, and sent the other eighteen under Calder off Ferrol.

Thus the junction which Villeneuve feared was effected, as he had foreseen. If the combined fleet, anchored in Ferrol since the 2d of August, had not been indebted to the very slowness of its movements, had it encountered the whole thirty-five ships under Cornwallis, we may still doubt, after the result of Trafalgar, that our fleet, in sacrificing itself, would have sufficiently damaged the enemy to insure the escape of Admiral Gantheaume out of Brest. If Villeneuve, on the other hand, as M. Thiers has remarked, had joined Lallemand's division at Vigo, where the latter had anchored on the 16th of August, he would, by steering for Brest, have had a chance of crossing the Bay without encountering Admiral Calder, and of surprising Cornwallis's eighteen ships, off Ushant, with his own thirty-three.* It is more probable, how-

* Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire, tome v. p. 444.

ever, that Calder, who returned off Ferrol on the 20th of August, would have been informed by the English cruisers, or neutral vessels, of Admiral Villeneuve's movements; and at that intelligence Calder would, doubtless, have rapidly retraced his steps, and rejoined Cornwallis, or, as Nelson would have done in his place, have followed and harassed the combined fleet to the very coast. In such case the fears of Villeneuve and of Gravina would have been infallibly realised. Had the junction of Villeneuve and Gantheaume been effected without fighting, in spite of so many unfavourable chances, — had these fifty-five ships been assembled before Brest, it still remained to conduct them up the Channel. Would thirty-five English ships, which might have been reinforced by others, have attempted to dispute the passage against our fifty-five? Would they have done so successfully, being within reach of their own harbours, and in those waters where, at that time, Cherbourg afforded insufficient shelter to our ships? It is to be remembered that the British squadrons were full of confidence, and formed by two years' constant cruising; while the combined fleet was little accustomed to manœuvre together, and would have had to contend with variable winds, irregular tides, and lengthening nights, which might all

have tended to disperse it. To Villeneuve's apprehension, unfortunately, these questions admitted of but one answer.

On the 11th of August that admiral sailed from Corunna, with a fine breeze from the eastward, and steered out to sea, at first in hopes of meeting the Rochefort squadron; and on the 13th, standing to the north-west, found himself abreast of Cape Ortegal, where the frigates Naiad and Iris had been left by Calder on the look-out. Next morning the wind changed to north-east; the English frigates which Villeneuve had chased were out of sight; but three strange sail were still visible to leeward. Two of them were English ships, — the Dragon, line-of-battle ship, and Phœnix, frigate; the third was the French frigate Didon, detached from Ferrol, in search of Captain Lallemand, and captured on the 10th of August by the Phœnix. A Danish ship, boarded by one of our frigates, reported that these three ships preceded an English fleet of twenty-five sail of the line. That report was unfounded, for Admiral Calder had not then quitted Cornwallis; but Villeneuve only wanted a pretext to steer for Cadiz. Changing his course suddenly, he steered down the coast of Portugal, out of sight of land, made Cape St. Vincent on the 18th of August, where he took

some merchant vessels, and on the 20th of August entered Cadiz, after having unsuccessfully pursued the three ships which blockaded that port under Collingwood.

From the moment that the junction of the French squadron at Martinique had failed, and that Nelson had got upon the track of Villeneuve, the plan of the expedition may be said to have been defeated. Any one but Napoleon would have abandoned the scheme thus frustrated; but he, by a last effort, although threatened by all Europe in arms, resolved to seize on England, which seemed ready to elude his grasp, and persisted in bringing Villeneuve to Brest. When the combined fleet, by entering Cadiz, extinguished his last hope, Napoleon only blamed Villeneuve; he charged him with want of courage, and with calumniating his ships. Villeneuve, in fact, from his desponding temper, was ill fitted for this expedition; but he was less culpable than was generally believed. Buonaparte, in associating the Spanish squadron with Villeneuve's, confided to him a more difficult task than that which he had made Latouche Tréville accept. Some months later, when much irritated, and yielding, as it were, to the impetuosity of his genius, he appealed from the indecision of Villeneuve to the intrepidity of our sailors; when, renouncing the

idea of eluding that navy which he feared to meet face to face, he resolved that our flag should assume the offensive, he returned to the true principles of maritime warfare. But he forgot — and it was an unfortunate oversight — the condition of the ships then shut up in Cadiz.

The day on which the violent act of the British cabinet threw Spain into our arms, all the pecuniary resources of Charles IV. and his ministers were at once cut off. Until then, the subsidies received from the colonies, the revenues of the customs, and the produce of the Mexican and South American mines, had supplied the place of the land tax, unknown in Spain, and thrown a semblance of prosperity over the miserable penury of that unhappy monarch. But when the English cruisers closed the ports of the Peninsula against the commerce and treasures of the New World, the destitution of the Spanish government appeared in all its nakedness. In October, 1805, "*the old King and Queen had not a single crown left to get themselves conveyed from the palace of San Ildefonso to the Escurial.*"* A frightful famine, followed by yellow fever, which principally attacked the coasts of Andalusia, and of the kingdom of Murcia, had decimated the

* Letters from General Beurnonville to Admiral Décrès.

maritime population. The magazines and arsenals were exhausted, the exchequer entirely empty, and the ministry discredited in public opinion. It was from this ruined country that an all-powerful ally demanded an auxiliary fleet, as part of the annual subsidy promised by Spain at the time of her neutrality, and 5,000,000 piastres, intended to supply the monetary circulation of France. The Prince of the Peace, whom our ambassador boasted to have kept in fear of the rod (*"faire marcher la gaule à la main"*), had agreed to every thing. In less than six months he had *produced, out of nothing*, twenty-nine sail of the line, and if the arsenals had been less destitute of materials, General Beurnonville would not have left *a single ship in the ports of Spain not ready for sea.** Thus, thanks to the

* List of ships fitted out by Spain from March to September, 1805:—

At Cadiz.		At Ferrol.		At Carthagena.	
Names.	*Guns.*	*Names.*	*Guns.*	*Names.*	*Guns.*
Santissima Trinidad	140	Principe de Asturias	110	Reyna	112
Santa Anna	112	Neptuno	80	Real Carlos	112
Rayo	100	San Juan Nepomuceno	74	El Paulo	74
Argonauta	80	San Ildefonso	74	Joaquin	74
San Rafael	80	San Agustino	74	Asia	74
Terrible	74	San Justo	74	Guerrero	80
Firme	74	Monarca	74	San Pablo	80
Bahama	74	Montañez	74	San Ramon	64
Glorioso	74	San Leandro	64		
America	64	San Francisco de Asis	64		
España	64				
11 ships.		10 ships.		8 ships.	

Total twenty-nine ships of the line.

submissiveness of the ministers, and the activity of the French ambassador, Gravina had been able to follow the Toulon squadron to the West Indies with six ships, to collect nine under his flag at Ferrol, and to find four others ready for sea at Cadiz. Port Mahon, and the principal sea-ports, had been placed in a state of defence. Gun-boats cruised around the coast, and Rear-Admiral Salcedo reckoned eight ships under his orders at Carthagena in the month of July. Had these prodigious efforts been the effect of a great national impulse, or of spontaneous generosity in the government, they might have endangered the British power. Wrung from the mean subserviency of an unpopular ministry, they only prepared a frightful disaster by creating false confidence in an imaginary force.

At that time every thing bowed to the imperial will, and Godoy was in no condition to oppose it; but, while undisguisedly making a tool of him, it was forgotten that, behind this favourite, there was a proud and suspicious nation, more aggrieved by these humiliations than it had been by the defeat of Gravina and Villeneuve. Thus, while the Spanish navy had been added to ours, the Spanish heart was no longer with us.* The

* M. Thiers is very indignant at the conduct of England in intercepting the treasure-ships of Spain before war was declared;

first symptoms of this suppressed irritation were not slow in appearing when Villeneuve entered Cadiz. His ships were short of provisions, and still more of ammunition: the Prince of the Peace immediately sent orders to place all the resources of the Caraccas arsenal at the disposal of the Admiral; but the superintendent of the marine at Cadiz, and the commandant of the artillery, refused to obey these instructions. They declared that nothing should leave the depôts confided to their charge, unless the Admiral deposited its value in their hands; *not in bills on Paris, or in paper money, but in hard cash.* When General Beurnonville heard of these difficulties, he flew to the Prince of the Peace, and easily obtained fresh orders; but obstacles sprung up again at each step, and time was lost by these unfortunate delays. The Spanish officers themselves, who, before the battle of the 22d of July, appeared to share the ardour of Admiral Gravina, showed great discouragement after the unhappy affair. They were heard to speak with bitterness about their two ships sacrificed to the

and his indignation would be justifiable enough were it not for the very different light in which he sees the equally oppressive conduct of his own hero, Buonaparte. What, after all, was our one act of violence (inexcusable as we must admit it to have been) compared to the long series of oppressions which ended in usurping the crown. — *English Translator.*

enemy, which a fleet of eighteen sail of the line, fourteen of them French, without having lost a mast or a yard, had shamefully allowed fourteen English ships to carry off. That desertion, they said, should have surprised no one: it might have been foreseen from the day when Villeneuve, to reach Martinique more rapidly, had left the Spanish squadron behind.*

These reproaches fell with intolerable weight on our sailors, and provoked angry replies, which reached Admiral Villeneuve's ears. Unable to answer these upbraidings, worn with anxiety, and, moreover, suffering from violent attacks of bilious colic, Villeneuve gave way to the deepest dejection, and cursed the day when he accepted this fatal command.† This lamentable state of mind, which displayed itself in all this ill-fated Admi-

* Letters attributed to officers of Admiral Gravina's squadron, were circulated in Cadiz at this time, and gave rise to a very angry correspondence between our consul, General Mons. le Roy, to the General Marques de la Soland.

† He wrote to Admiral Décrès, — "A letter has fallen into my hands addressed to a lord of the Admiralty by the Captain of the Queen, in which he says, "We are blockading the seven ships in Cadiz with four; and if they come out we hope to give a good account of them by attacking them at night, or in a good strong breeze;" and I do not doubt that an attack of that kind would infallibly succeed, because, in the state to which we are reduced by the want of sea practice in our officers and seamen, and of war practice among our captains, as well as by the want of efficient combination, the slightest accident at night throws us into disorder and confusion.

ral's despatches, added to Napoleon's displeasure. Baulked by unforeseen chances in the grandest scheme which ever emanated from his genius, Buonaparte severely condemned the retreat of the combined fleet to Cadiz; and in that determination he saw less of deliberate conviction than panic fright, and reproached Villeneuve the more severely with this "confused mixture of discouragement and dispondency;" because, as Admiral Décrès wrote, "no sentiment is more foreign to his own great mind, or disgusts him more in others." The army of Boulogne was already on its march for Germany, and the expedition to England indefinitely postponed; but the Emperor, in renouncing for the time his design of calling his fleet into the Channel, wished to see his own flag, and that of his allies, paramount on the coast of Andalusia and the Straits of Gibraltar. He calculated on having about thirty-six sail of the line assembled at Cadiz, and thought it impossible that the enemy could have already collected so large a force in that quarter. The combined fleet was, therefore, to be provisioned for six months, with the least possible delay, and to be kept ready for sea. Napoleon ordered Villeneuve, as soon as the fleet should be provisioned, to ensure the junction of the eight ships in Carthagena, which had put to sea

more than once, but had been prevented from making Cadiz by the fear of meeting an English squadron at the entrance of the straits. "The Emperor's intentions," wrote Admiral Décrès to Villeneuve, while sending him these new instructions, "is, to seek throughout all ranks of the navy for the officers most fitted for the highest commands; and that which he requires above all things is, a noble ambition, love of glory, a decided character, and boundless courage. . . His Majesty wishes to put an end to that over-caution which he reproaches his navy with, that defensive system which destroys our daring, and doubles that of the enemy. He desires to see that daring in his admirals, captains, officers, and seamen; and whatever may be the result, he promises his countenance and favour to those who shall carry it to excess: never to hesitate about attacking inferior, or even equal forces, and to fight them to extermination; *that* is what his Majesty insists on. He thinks nothing of the loss of his ships, provided they are lost with glory: he will not allow his squadrons to be blockaded by an inferior enemy; and should such present itself before Cadiz, he enjoins and commands you not to hesitate about attacking it. The Emperor desires you to use every means to inspire all those under you with these sentiments, by your actions, your

language, and by all that can raise their courage ("*élever les cœurs*"). Nothing should be neglected with this view; frequent sorties, all kinds of encouragement, hazardous enterprises, orders of the day which shall excite enthusiasm (and his Majesty requires that these should be multiplied, and that you should send them to me regularly). All must be had recourse to for rousing and exalting the courage of our sailors. His Majesty intends to open the door of all honours and distinctions to them, and these shall be the prize of every brilliant attempt. He is pleased to think that you will be the first to win them; and, whatever may have been the reproaches which he has desired me to convey to you, I feel pleasure in being able to tell you, in all sincerity, that his highest approbation and most distinguished favour is only waiting for the first signal action which shall testify your courage." This despatch, whose illustrious author is betrayed in every line, — this magnificent * language, which so often carried enthusiasm into our ranks, makes

* As Englishmen, we are puzzled to find any true "magnificence" in this pompous, but ill tempered, effusion, which was evidently penned in one of those angry moods which became more frequent with Buonaparte as his fortunes raised him above his natural sphere. If he *meant* what he said, then the destruction of Villeneuve's whole fleet was the natural and obvious consequence of his order. If he only vented his anger in unwise instructions, others suffered for his folly.—*Translator's note.*

it easy to understand how Villeneuve came to fight the battle of Trafalgar a month later. The emperor acknowledged at last the danger of those complicated operations and intricate plans of which a commander may avail himself to avoid the enemy; but in suddenly returning to other theories, in commanding his fleets to assume the offensive, without having given them the means of sustaining it,—in thus expecting from love of glory and gallantry in battle that which should have been obtained by patient efforts and good institutions, the emperor, we must say, seemed desirous of grasping victory by a desperate effort rather than by fairly conquering it. Unhappily, he then addressed himself to a man personally brave, who, in the dejection from which he was then suffering, was ready to undertake any thing to wash out the stain people had cast upon his honour. With discontented allies, ships, some of which had put to sea for the first time, officers whose confidence he had lost, gunners who, for the most part had never fired a shot, Villeneuve, tired of war, resolved to play one of those games which, if lost, shake the best established empires. While the French admiral disputed with the destitution of an exhausted arsenal, and the ill-will of the Spanish authorities, for some wretched supplies which were indispensable to him, Col-

lingwood had resumed his station before Cadiz, and received fresh reinforcements every day. On the 22d of August, Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton brought him four ships. On the 30th, Sir Robert Calder joined him with the squadron placed under his command by Cornwallis. Collingwood had, therefore, assembled twenty-six ships under his orders before Villeneuve could think of putting to sea; but it was not Collingwood for whom the honour of this important command was reserved; his fortunate rival had anchored at Spithead, where the people, in their alarm, received him as a deliverer. Notwithstanding this triumphant reception, rendered still more expressive by the approach of danger, Nelson refused to stop at Portsmouth, and started at once for London. On the morning of the 20th of August he presented himself at the Admiralty, and found the ministry in consternation at Villeneuve's sudden return, and the junction which Calder had been unable to prevent. Eleven enemy's ships had sailed from Toulon, and twenty had been found in the West Indies. Suddenly it was discovered that there were twenty-nine in Ferrol. In spite of the English squadrons, the formidable avalanche was still increasing, and already appeared moving towards the Channel. What would happen if Calder, with his eighteen

ships, should find himself again in Villeneuve's way? "Calder," answered Nelson, "might be beaten; but I will answer for it that, after gaining that victory, the combined fleet need not be feared any more for this year."

The Admiralty, re-assured by Nelson's confidence, could not refuse him some days' rest. The Admiral profited by them to fly to Merton. Sir William had died in the beginning of 1803, and since that period Lady Hamilton, with the young Horatia, had lived in that pleasing residence, which she owed to the liberality of her lover. Nelson was forgetting, in its cool shades, the anxieties of his late campaign *, when Captain Blackwood came to him to announce the arrival of the combined fleet at Cadiz. Next morning Nelson was in London, and had placed his sword at the disposal of the Admiralty. Lord Barham received him with open arms. "Choose," he said, "the officers you would like to have under your orders." "Choose them yourself, my lord," said Nelson; "the same spirit animates the whole navy; you cannot go wrong." The British government, long ungrateful to Nelson, had at last learned to treat him with the distinction his signal services deserved. Lord Barham

* We do not use this word as the French do in *naval* affairs; but what other equally well expresses it? — *English Translator.*

gave him unlimited powers for his command, which was to extend from Cadiz to the extremity of the Mediterranean, and desired him to give his private secretary the names of the ships he wished to add to his squadron. On the 7th September, Nelson took leave of the Admiralty, returned to Merton, and could not tear himself away this time without a sinister presentiment. "I have much to lose," he said, "and little to gain. I might have spared myself from new dangers, but I wished to act like an honourable man, and serve my country faithfully." The 14th September, still feeling his painful separation, he arrived at Portsmouth, and recovered all his energy on going on board the Victory. The 29th he was before Cadiz, after having been joined by the Ajax and Thunderer, off Plymouth. Two Vice-Admirals, Collingwood and Calder, and two Rear-Admirals, Thomas Louis and the Earl of Northesk, were placed under his orders; but the senior of the two Vice-Admirals, Sir R. Calder, was to return to England, to be tried for his conduct on the 22d July, and Collingwood only was to remain with Nelson.

On what trifling events do the destinies of great men turn! Collingwood had entered the navy before Nelson, his junior by eight years, but did not receive his lieutenant's and captain's

commissions until after his brilliant rival. No more was necessary to decide the fortunes of these two men. Collingwood, outstripped in reaching the rank of captain, could never, thenceforward, be any thing but subordinate to Nelson. Naturally simple and modest, he long remained in the background to which the renown of the conqueror of Aboukir consigned all his contemporaries. When he emerged from that comparative obscurity, the time of great battles had passed. Thus, after having fought in the battles of the 1st of June, and Cape St. Vincent, after having shared with Nelson the honour of the latter triumph, Collingwood, scarcely sixty, but exhausted with fifty years' service, of which forty-four had been passed at sea, died in 1810, without bearing to the tomb one victory which might be called his own, or any laurels exclusively his own right. Calmer and more resigned than Nelson, and endowed with higher moral feelings, he did not possess in the same degree as the hero of the Nile that feverish ardour which creates opportunities, controls circumstances, and would "*pluck*," if necessary, "*drowning honour by the hair.*" Collingwood and Nelson, however, are two names which can never be separated in history: they mutually complete each other. One is the highest repre-

sentative of a superior navy, the other the exceptional genius, who draws after him, in untrodden paths, that navy which he has subjugated by his genius. Collingwood, a stranger to every feeling of envy, and solely occupied with the dangerous crisis which threatened his country, descended without regret to the second rank. He promised Nelson his well-tried support, and rejoiced at the additional honour which the numerical superiority of the enemy held out to the English fleet. "The miserable advantage of numbers," said he, "only engenders apathy; but which of us will not feel his courage increased, when the safety of England seems to depend upon our efforts?" It was not a fortuitous circumstance, the mere effect of a sudden emergency which had produced this apparent inequality of the two fleets; 104 ships of the line, constantly exposed to all weathers, absorbed the entire resources of the English arsenals, and rarely afforded an effective force of more than seventy-two ships. Of these seventy-two ships, again, scarcely sixty were to be found in the European seas at that moment. In the same quarter Napoleon had succeeded in assembling sixty-five, — Twenty-one at Brest, five in the Texel, thirty-four at Cadiz, five at sea under the orders of Captain Lallemand. The Admiralty,

driven to every expedient, and obliged to raise seamen even on the coast of Portugal *, promised Nelson to send him reinforcements as soon as it was possible. In the meantime they enjoined him, in the most urgent manner, to retain all the ships fit for service, and only to send home those which absolutely required it. It was in one of these latter ships that Admiral Calder, leaving Nelson the three-decker which bore his flag, was to take his passage; but Calder could not bear the idea of quitting his ship in presence of a whole fleet which he had recently led into action. Nelson respected this ill-timed sensitiveness, for he was generous to an imprudent excess; and, notwithstanding the formal orders of the Admiralty, Sir Robert Calder sailed for Portsmouth in the Prince of Wales three-decker, a few days before the enemy came out. Nelson saw his departure with joy, though on the eve of a great battle: he little regretted the magnificent ship which he gave up, for the melancholy and desponding mood of the unhappy officer formerly his rival, fretted his sanguine mind, and seemed to cast a gloom over the cheerfulness of the fleet. "Calder is gone," he wrote to Collingwood, "and, to tell the truth, I am delighted. I want to tell you all I

* Letters of Nelson to the English consul at Lisbon.

have learned, and have some talk with you. In any case we can always talk by telegraph. Make use of it as much as you please, and do so without ceremony. We are both one, and I hope we shall never be otherwise. . . . I have sent you my plan of attack; but it is only, my dear friend, to tell you my intentions. As to the execution, I trust entirely to your judgment. We can, my dear Coll, have no little jealousies; we have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our enemies and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you, and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend" — NELSON and BRONTE.

This fraternal friendship must have doubled the strength of the British fleet; and as if to make its triumph more certain, Nelson's arrival already produced its accustomed effect throughout the ranks of his powerful fleet. The captains, crowding on board the Victory, seemed to forget the rank of their commander-in-chief in testifying their joy. While he, strong in his accustomed confidence, united all minds, healed all divisions, and tightened the bonds of union ere he exposed his squadron to the foe. Thus on all sides—in the captain's cabin, in the wardroom, or in the midshipman's berth—might be heard

the expressions which Captain Duff used in writing to his wife: "Nelson is such an amiable and excellent man, and so agreeable as commander-in-chief, that we all desire to exceed his wishes and anticipate his orders." Never was such devotion more necessary, for Nelson had resolved to strike a decisive blow. "I will stake my life," he would say at times, while he revolved his daring plans; then, again, he would regret the inferiority of his forces. "But I did not come here to make difficulties, but to surmount them; the Admiralty will send me more ships as soon as they can. . . . Mr. Pitt well knows that it is not merely a splendid victory of twenty-three ships over thirty-six which the country requires; that which we need is that the combined fleet should be annihilated, and it is only numbers which *can annihilate*."

Successive reinforcements at last raised Nelson's fleet to thirty-three sail of the line; but of these he was obliged to send six to Tetuan and Gibraltar for water. "You are sending us away, my Lord," said Rear-Admiral Louis, who commanded this detachment, "and the enemy will come out during our absence, which will deprive us of our share in the battle." It was necessary, however, notwithstanding the provisions received by the fleet under sail, to

supply it thus in detachments, or else to raise the blockade some day in order to take the whole fleet to Gibraltar. By adopting this last measure, he would have allowed Villeneuve to leave Cadiz; and Nelson knew that England, still excited by the dangers she had escaped, would not have forgiven such a fault.

The assembling of the English forces before our ports left a clear field for the five ships which had sailed from Rochefort: that squadron, composed of picked ships, whose good fortune was apparent, had already taken the Calcutta 74, and a convoy of whalers. It had, likewise, very nearly captured the Agamemnon off Oporto, before Sir Richard Strachan, detached with five sail of the line and two frigates in their pursuit, was able to get upon their track. Captain Lallemand, recently promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral by the emperor, might therefore enter Cadiz as suddenly as Rear-Admiral Salcedo; and this double junction would have raised the combined fleets to forty-six sail of the line. Allowing that Nelson had not then any detachment at Gibraltar, and that Sir Richard Strachan, as well as Rear-Admiral Knight, charged with the blockade of Carthagena, should hasten to join his flag; the English fleet, notwithstanding this concentration of force, could not

exceed the sum, inferior number of forty ships. Nelson, to provide for every case, supposed these various junctions to be effected, and formed his plan of operations on that basis, the largest which could be required. "Thinking it almost impossible," he wrote in a memorandum addressed to the captains of his fleet, "to bring a fleet of forty sail of the line into a line of battle in variable winds, thick weather, and other circumstances which may occur, without such a loss of time, that the opportunity would probably be lost of bringing the enemy to battle in such a manner as to make the business decisive, I have therefore made up my mind that (with the exception of the first and second in command), the order of sailing is to be the order of battle. Placing the fleet in two lines of sixteen ships, each with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-decked ships, which will always make, if wanted, a line of twenty-four sail on whichever line the commander-in-chief may direct." After having divided the fleet into two divisions, Nelson intended to fight two distinct battles, — one offensive, which he assigned to Collingwood, one defensive, with which he charged himself. To attain this end, he proposed to cut through Villeneuve's line, which would probably extend over a space of five or

six miles, so as to separate it into two parts, then to leave Collingwood the advantage of number, and to resist with his own ships the weight of superior forces. Thus the English fleet was to be composed of forty sail of the line; the combined fleet of forty-six. Collingwood, with sixteen, was to attack twelve of the enemy's; and Nelson, with the rest, was to deal with the thirty-four remaining ones. To resist the onset of this mass, he had no intention of remaining inactive; he intended, on the contrary, to throw himself upon the centre ships, surrounding the commander-in-chief, to isolate Admiral Villeneuve from his fleet by this movement, and prevent his transmitting orders to the van ships. To keep the van in suspense by this movement, was to gain valuable time. If this part of the combined fleet did not at once and spontaneously adopt an energetic resolution, if it did not hasten into fire until after uselessly awaiting the admiral's signals, Collingwood's ships, more numerous by one fourth than their opponents', would have overwhelmed the rear before the van had fired a single shot. Collingwood's column, no doubt, would not have achieved this victory without losing some masts and yards; but the moral effect which would follow this triumph, would amply compensate for

this disadvantage, and forty ships, at whatever price they bought a first success, would have nothing to fear from thirty-four others uninjured, but discouraged by the defeat of their friends.

Such was the spirit of that memorandum so often canvassed, so often celebrated as the highest specimen of naval tactics, and as the professional bequest of the most illustrious admiral that England has produced. It will be seen what important modifications the fiery impatience of Nelson, and the circumstances never to be foreseen of a naval combat, introduced at the time. That which should, however, engage our attention, is less the tactical than the moral view of this ingenious design; it is less the able distribution of his forces imagined by Nelson, than the noble confidence in which it originated. "When I shall have made known my intentions to the second in command," he repeats in many parts of this memorandum, "the entire and absolute direction of his column will be left to him. It is for him to conduct the attack as he sees best; it is for him to follow up his advantages until he shall have taken or destroyed the ships he has cut off. *I will take care that the other enemy's ships do not interrupt him.* . . . As for the captains, if during the battle my signal can neither be seen nor perfectly understood, no captain can

do very wrong, if he places his ship alongside *that of an enemy.*"

At these noble words—this simple, but profound exposition of the most important principles in naval tactics—the Admiral's cabin, where the flag officers and captains of the fleet were then assembled, was filled with a murmur of applause. "When I came to explain to them *the Nelson touch*," writes Nelson, "it was like an electric shock. Some shed tears, all approved; 'it was new—it was singular—it was simple!' and from admirals downwards it was repeated, 'it *must* succeed if ever they will allow us to get at them.'" In the adverse fleet preparations were likewise making. There the same activity prevailed; the same heroic devotion, but not the same confidence. Gravina, deficient in nothing, not *even in good-will*, as General Beurnonville expressed it, declared himself ready to sail, inspirited his discouraged squadron to the best of his power, yet, at the same time, secretly shared the too well-founded fears of Admiral Villeneuve. The latter, the most accomplished officer, the most able tactician, whatever people may say, but not the most resolute man the French navy then possessed, despairingly prognosticated the designs of his able adversary. "He will not confine himself," he would say to his officers, "to forming a

line of battle parallel to ours, and fighting an artillery battle; he will endeavour to surround our rear, to cut through our line, and to bring groups of his ships upon those he has cut off, to enclose and overwhelm them." With a view to opposing these unusual tactics, he designed only to present an equal number of ships to the British in line of battle: the rest of the fleet was to be placed under Gravina's orders, and to compose a reserve ready to support any portion of the line which should require assistance.

This plan had been formed at a time when the enemy had but twenty-one ships before Cadiz, and became impracticable when Nelson received reinforcements. Nor would it have sufficed to conceive new orders of sailing and of battle, to prepare rapid concentrations, and unexpected combinations; it was, above all, necessary to have ships accustomed to execute these difficult movements. Naval evolutions are of too delicate a nature to be practicable for a fleet which is unused to them. They require a sure coup d'œil, a precision of movement which the best officers do not always possess, which those even who have possessed them do not always retain in an equal degree after long inaction, or on the first day of quitting harbour. Thus Villeneuve, alarmed at the risks attending the introduction of new evo-

lutions, instinctively returned to the established rules of the old tactical system. Gravina's squadron, consisting of twelve ships, French and Spanish, retained the name of the reserved squadron, but was, in reality, to form the van of the combined fleet. "I have neither time nor means," exclaimed Villeneuve, in his dejection, "to adopt another system of tactics with the commanders of the two navies. . . . I fully believe they will remain at their posts; but not one of them would be equal to taking any bold decision." Possibly Villeneuve adopted the only wise part in this emergency; by doubling his line of battle with a second line, in which each ship should be placed in the interval between every two ships of the first, he ran the risk of masking the fire of a part of his force. In dividing his fleet, he would have incurred a still greater danger, because the weaker part, as happened in the battle of St. Vincent, might, after a fruitless attempt, resign itself to a premature retreat. In forming his fleet, on the contrary, in a single line, he presented, it is true, too extended a front; but, at least, he left every ship free scope for her guns, and retained the power of doubling, without confusion, upon that part of the line which would be threatened by the enemy. It was for this reason that he maintained the ancient order of

battle, and addressed these simple and memorable words (which, unfortunately, condemned his own conduct at Aboukir) to his fleet: "All the efforts of our ships should be directed to the support of those attacked, and to closing round the Admiral, who will set the example. . . . It is much more by his own courage and love of glory that each captain should be directed, than by the Admiral's signals; who, being himself engaged, and enveloped in smoke, may not, perhaps, have the power of making any. . . . Every captain who is not under fire is out of his station. . . . and a signal made to remind him will be a stain upon his honour."

Thus was the bloody day of Trafalgar prepared for. Pitt, as we have said, had re-united the broken threads of the old coalition. Napoleon had moved his army from the coast; for threatened on the side of Germany, he was still more seriously so on that of Italy. In front of Massena the Archduke Charles commanded the principal Austrian army. The English and Russians were to land at Tarento, Naples, or Ancona, with the troops already assembled at Malta and Corfu; and these troops, joining the Neapolitan army, were to surprise the 20,000 men who, under General Gouvion St. Cyr, occupied the fortified town of Pescara, and the northern frontier of Naples. Subsequently

marching on Genoa, through Tuscany and Parma, they were to fall suddenly upon the rear of Massena's army. This diversion, now proposed to the court of Vienna, was the favourite plan of General Dumouriez, which he specially recommended to Nelson, and desired to direct himself. "We shall thus realise," wrote Dumouriez to the Admiral, "the projects which we used to form together at Hamburgh, against the savage usurper whom we both equally abhor." But this able design had not escaped the piercing eye of Napoleon; and, while the Queen of Naples, ready to embark in new adventures, wrote to Nelson, formerly her *liberator*, and still her *hero*, "your name alone excites the courage of every one! . . the grand crisis approaches, God grant it may be for good," General St. Cyr received the following instructions: "To take Naples, expel the court, disperse and annihilate the Neapolitan army before the English and Russians could know that hostilities had commenced."

Some days after signing these instructions, on September 17. 1805, Napoleon sent Villeneuve orders to sail with the combined fleet, steering first for Carthagena, to pick up Admiral Salcedo there; from Carthagena to proceed to Naples, and land the troops he had embarked to join General St. Cyr. "Our intention," added the

emperor, "is, that *wherever you find the enemy in inferior force, you should attack him without hesitation, and bring on a decisive action.* . . . You must be aware that the success of these operations will mainly depend on the promptitude of your departure from Cadiz. We feel that you will neglect nothing to effect it without delay; and we require the utmost bravery and activity in this important expedition." With Villeneuve the emperor did not fear saying too much, as, according to his expression, the Admiral was "one who required the spur more than the curb." Convinced, moreover, while ordering him on this unfortunate expedition, that "his excessive pusillanimity would prevent his undertaking it," he had privately despatched Admiral Rosily from Paris. That flag officer, if he found the combined fleet still at Cadiz, was to take the command, hoist his flag at the main in the Bucentaure, and send Vice-Admiral Villeneuve to France, "to account for his conduct."

Admiral Décrès, who was sincerely attached to Villeneuve, wrote this order with a trembling hand. He, whose pen was so ready, whose style was so clear and flowing, now blotted and altered twenty times the five or six lines by which he informed that unhappy officer of his recall and

the emperor's intentions.* Less than any one else could he hope for any happy circumstance which should restore Villeneuve to the favour he had lost before receiving the letter, for Décrès himself was under no illusion as to the condition of the combined fleet. "I have a good opinion," he said to the emperor, "of the real force of your Majesty's ships; I have also some opinion of those under Admiral Gravina, which have been at sea; but as to the Spanish ships, coming out of port for the first time, commanded by inexperienced captains, and badly manned, I confess I do not know what one might safely venture upon the very next day after sailing, with this numerous portion of the fleet."

The council of war, assembled by Villeneuve before he prepared to leave Cadiz, expressed the same opinion as the Minister of Marine. Admirals Gravina, Alava, Escaño and Cisneros, the Commodores Macdonel and Galiano represented the Spanish fleet; Rear-Admirals Dumanoir and Magon, Captains Cosmao, Maistral, Villegris and Prigny represented the French in this council. Their opinion was unanimous: they declared "that the ships of the two nations were, for the most part, ill manned, that many of them had

* The rough copy of this letter still exists in the Archives of the Marine.

not yet had time to exercise their crews at sea, and that the two three-deckers, Santa Anna and Rayo, the San Justo, 74, manned in haste, and just out of the dockyard, might, if required, sail with the fleet, but that they could not render the same military services as if completely organised." Such, however, was the devotion of these gallant men, that, notwithstanding these sinister presentiments, they all bowed, like Tourville's brave captains formerly, to the unanswerable argument, "It is the King's command that you attack;" but Tourville, when opposed to the enemy, had the honourable disadvantage of numbers. Villeneuve, on the other hand, was to have in that respect a wretched and useless superiority. "The English, said the emperor, "will look very small when France shall have two or three admirals *willing to die*." No one was more resigned to such a sacrifice than Admiral Villeneuve; too happy if, at that price, he could have hoped to save his fleet. "But to leave Cadiz," he wrote to Admiral Décrès, "without being able to enter the Straits immediately, and with the certainty of having to fight a superior enemy, would be to lose every thing. I cannot believe that it is his Imperial Majesty's wish to expose the greater part of his naval forces to such a desperate chance, which does not even promise them the

reward of glory." These last scruples were, unhappily, to be soon removed: Vice-Admiral Rosily was already at Madrid; an accident which happened to his carriage had prevented his setting out on the 14th of October, and during that time Admiral Villeneuve had learnt his arrival in Spain.* That news cut Villeneuve to the heart. "I should be happy," he wrote to the Minister of Marine, "to give up the first rank to Admiral Rosily, if, at least, the second were allowed to me; . . . but it would be too painful to me to lose all hope of having an opportunity to prove myself worthy of better fortune. If the wind permits me to sail, I will sail to-morrow." At this moment he was informed that Nelson had detached six ships to Gibraltar; he immediately summoned Admiral Gravina on board the Bucentaure, and, after consulting with him for some minutes, made the signal to his fleet to prepare for sea.

During the last two months, our ships, and still more the Spanish, had lost a number of sailors by desertion; before weighing, some of them were picked up in the streets of Cadiz; but the greater part had already escaped into the country, and, on the morning of the 19th, few

* It then took ten days to post from Madrid to Cadiz.

crews were complete. At seven o'clock, however, the combined fleet commenced its movement. At half-past nine, Nelson was informed of it, being then, with the bulk of the English fleet, about sixteen leagues W. N. W. of Cadiz. Knowing that Villeneuve, should he enter the Straits before him, would have a chance of escape, he steered in that direction. A fleet does not easily get out of the port of Cadiz. Six years before Admiral Villeneuve's time, Admiral Bruix had taken three days to leave it. The calm and contrary current soon arrested the movement of the combined fleet, and on the 19th of October, eight or nine ships only succeeded in getting through the passages. Next morning a light breeze from south-east facilitated the sailing of the remainder. The beautiful weather of the 19th became overcast during the night, and seemed to threaten a south-west gale; but some hours of a commanding breeze would take the combined fleet to windward of Cape Trafalgar, and the storm which should overtake Villeneuve in this position, if from west or south-west, would be favourable to his object. At ten in the morning, the last French and Spanish ships were out of Cadiz; the English fleet was a few leagues from Cape Spartel, guarding the entrance of the straits.

It was then that Villeneuve, having resolved

not to draw back, wrote his last despatch to Admiral Décrès. "The whole fleet is under sail . . . the wind is at S. S. W.; but I think that it will only last during the morning; eighteen sail have been telegraphed to me, so it is probable that the inhabitants of Cadiz will have to give you some news of us. . . . In this departure, Monseigneur, I have only consulted my anxious wish to conform to his Majesty's intentions, and to do my best to remove the displeasure caused by the result of my last operations. If the present one succeeds, I shall scarcely be able to avoid thinking that all was thus decreed, and all calculated for the best interests of his Majesty's service."

Thus Villeneuve then had sailed, and was advancing to the encounter, but he advanced without confidence. In that fleet, so brave and devoted, he perceived the latent sources of destruction. He was alarmed without being able to define the exact cause of his apprehensions: the memory of Aboukir was at the bottom of his fears; but what are the grievances which we find recurring in all his despatches? "Want of sea practice in our officers and sailors, want of war practice in our commanding officers, and want of unity ('ensemble') in all." Here were, doubtless, just and serious causes of complaint, on the

eve of a battle. There was, however, an evil more real than Villeneuve ever described, or attempted to remedy, and which, in 1802, was admirably exposed by the celebrated engineer Forfait. "It is really," wrote Forfait, in a brochure too little noticed at the time, "the cannon which alone gives the law at sea. It is truly amusing," he adds, with reason, "to hear people enter into long arguments about the causes of British superiority . . . four words explain it . . . they have ships well fitted, guns well served, and they manœuvre well . . . with you it is all the contrary. . . . When you are like them, you will make head against them. . . . You will beat them when you are able to come to the charge at sea." If any one will picture to himself the destructive effects to be expected from a mass of iron, whose total weight sometimes exceeds 3000 lbs., driven through space with a velocity double that of sound *, travelling 1600 feet in a second, and suddenly arrested in its course by a penetrable substance which tears and flies into splinters more fatal than the shot itself, he will understand the formidable power of a line-of-battle ship's first broadside. Instead of

* The velocity of sound in air at 15° Reaumur, is 341 metres a second; that of a twenty-four pound shot, impelled by six kilogrammes of powder, is 500 metres.

frittering away this irresistible force as we used to do then *, in the hope of cutting some ropes crossing an open space, or for the mere chance of destroying some important rigging or wounding a mast, the English better taught, concentrated it upon a more certain object, the enemy's batteries. They heaped our decks with slain, while our shot passed over their ships.† More

* The treatises on artillery and tactics most esteemed in France and Spain, the valuable works of M. Audibert de Ramatuelle and M. de Churruca, and the official instructions published by authority of the Minister of Marine, formerly recommended "to bear in mind that the first and principal object in naval actions is to unrig and dismast the enemy." "It has been constantly remarked," observes General Sir Howard Douglas very judiciously, "that in our engagements with the French, our ships always suffered more in their rigging than their hull. The general use made by the French of the line of metal as a sight, may in some cases have been the cause; but we must also seek the source of these errors in the old rule established in the French navy of never firing when the ship rolled towards the enemy, but always with the opposite motion, so that the shots which missed the hull might always take effect on the masts or rigging. That precept sufficiently explains the little damage which our ships have always received in the hull when engaging the French."—*Treatise on Naval Gunnery by General Sir Howard Douglas.*

† Vice-Admiral Emeriau was among the first to remark that the uncertainty of an aim, intended either to dismast or strike under water, had been shown by experience. He directed the ships which he commanded at Toulon in 1812, to aim at the enemy's quarters, to spread confusion through them. About the same period one of the young captains who sprang up on all sides (a gallant school who would have redeemed the reverses of the empire had the empire survived) addressed to his gunners before a brilliant battle this advice, redolent of Gallic humour and good sense, —"My friends, aim low; the English don't like people to kill them."

practised than our gunners, uniting a rapidity long unknown to us to the precision of their fire, the English in 1805 (not in all their ships perhaps, but in ships well commanded, such as the Foudroyant and Dreadnought) had attained to firing each gun nearly once a minute. At the same time, our best served guns were only fired once in three minutes.* It is to this double inferiority that we should have attributed, if truth did not penetrate but slowly, the greater part of our reverses since 1793. It was to that hailstorm of shot, as Nelson called it, that England then owed the absolute empire of the sea; by it he, himself, won the victory of Aboukir, and was about to win that of Trafalgar.

The breeze which had taken Villeneuve's and Gravina's ships out of harbour had suddenly freshened. Retarded in their progress by the inexperience of several Spanish ships which had fallen to leeward while reefing, the combined fleet drew off slowly from the shore, and Nelson, informed by his frigates of all its movements, already hastened to the encounter; but the sudden gusts of wind were succeeded by another calm, and night came on before the two fleets were in sight. Lights were then seen on various

* Rules for Pointing, by M. de Montgéry, p. 83.

points of the horizon; they were the signals of the English fleet, and the look-out ships which felt the way for them. The reports of cannon, repeated from time to time, and blue-lights, casting a bright and sudden glare in the midst of profound darkness, were soon added to these signals, and convinced Admiral Villeneuve that he would vainly attempt to conceal his course from his active foes. About ten at night the admiral felt the necessity of collecting his ships. He made signal to form line of battle.* The next day, October 21. 1805, day for ever to be deplored! found the two fleets off Cape Trafalgar. Nelson, wisely checking his pursuit during the night, had retained the advantage of a windward position. At sunrise he closed up his forces, and anxiously looked for our ships. At four or five leagues from the English fleet, extended in disorder over a vast space, and slowly passing along the Andalusian coast, still en-

* "The 20th October, at nine at night, the English squadron made signals by firing guns, and by the interval of about eight seconds between hearing the sound and seeing the flash, we were able to calculate that they were about two miles from our squadron. We made signals with lanterns to the French admiral for the necessity of forming line of battle on the leewardmost ships without delay. The admiral repeated the signal with guns."—*Report of the Battle of Trafalgar addressed to the Prince of the Peace, on the 22d October, by Rear-Admiral Escaño, Chief of*

veloped in the morning mist, the combined fleet was standing for the Straits.*

the staff, to Admiral Gravina. Extracted from the Gazette of Madrid on the 5th of November, 1805.

"On the 20th of October, about nine at night, the admiral made signal to form line of battle immediately, without regarding proper stations . . . the fleet was much dispersed. The ships belonging to the line of battle and those of the squadron of observation had become mixed up together." — *Report of M. Lucas, commanding the Redoutable, to the Minister of Marine.*

* "We were not sailing in any order at daybreak on the 21st, when we perceived the enemy to windward." — *Report of Rear-Admiral Escaño.*

"The 21st of October, at seven in the morning, made signal for the line of battle in the customary order on the starboard tack. Our fleet was in scarcely any sailing order, but in a pretty close mass, and less extended than the English squadron." — *Report of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir-le-Pelley, Plymouth, Nov.* 16. 1805.

"Near seven in the morning the admiral made signal to form line of battle in the customary order on the starboard tack." — *Report of the Commandant Lucas.*

History relates few important events, the details of which have been given with so much agreement as to leave no room for controversy. The battle of Trafalgar, therefore, should present, like all great catastrophes, certain doubtful and obscure points on which the recollections of cotemporaries, or even of the actors in that terrible drama, cannot throw sufficient light in the present day. Considering this unavoidable uncertainty, the following list of the only signals which we can find recorded in the Archives of the Marine will not be without interest: —

H.	M.	21st October, 1805.
6	30, A. M.	— The frigate l'Hermione makes signal for an enemy's squadron.
7	0, A. M.	— Admiral Villeneuve makes signal to the fleet to form line of battle in the customary manner on the starboard tack; makes signal at the same time to clear for action.

The two fleets found themselves in presence for the first time. A general movement was visi-

" 7 0, A. M. — The frigate l'Hermione makes signal for twenty-six sail of the line.

" 7 20, A. M. — Admiral Villeneuve directs the line to be formed at a cable's length distance between every two ships.

" 8 0, A. M. — Admiral Villeneuve makes signal to the fleet to wear together.

" 8 30, A. M. — Admiral Villeneuve makes signal to the van ships to carry more sail.

" 9 30, A. M. — Admiral Villeneuve orders the San Augustino to keep to the wind, and the Scipion to make more sail.

" 10 0, A. M. — Admiral Villeneuve orders the van ships to keep their wind, and to the others to follow in succession.

" 10 30, A. M. — The frigate La Thémis makes signal to Admiral Gravina, 'the combined line of battle is too much extended.'

" 10 40, A. M. — The frigate La Thémis makes signal to Admiral Gravina, 'the rear ships are in too open order.'

" 10 45, A. M. — Admiral Gravina orders each ship of the rear division to close her second a-head to one cable's length.

" 11 0, A. M. — Admiral Villeneuve repeats the orders to the leading ship to keep her wind, and the others to follow in her wake.

" 11 30, A. M. — Admiral Gravina orders the rear ships to come to the wind. Admiral Villeneuve orders the Rayo to close up, and the fleet to commence fire when within range.

" 12 30, P. M. — Admiral Villeneuve makes signal to ships not engaged in their present stations to take one which shall bring them into action.

" 1 5, P. M. — The Rhin frigate makes signal that the enemy is detaching ships to double on the rear division.

" 1 30, P. M. — Rear-Admiral Dumanoir makes signal to the van

ble throughout their lines. The French and Spanish ships hastened to improve the line of battle which they had hurriedly formed during the night. The English ships crowded all sail, and, with their studding-sails on both sides, bore down upon their foes. At eight o'clock Admiral Villeneuve discovered that a general engagement was inevitable. He prepared for it without faltering, and with a practised eye chose his position.* By a rapid change the fleet, wearing

ships to wear and come into action. The frigate l'Hortense informs Admiral Villeneuve, by signal, that ten of the van ships are not engaging.

" 1 45, P. M. — Admiral Villeneuve makes signal to the van ships to wear. The frigate l'Hermione makes signal to the ships whose guns do not bear to take a better position. L'Hermione hoists the number of the Argonaute.

" 4 30, P. M. — Admiral Gravina makes the signal to close; the Neptune repeats the signal of Admiral Gravina; the Neptune makes signal to the ships not totally disabled to follow her movements."

— *Archives of the Depôt of Charts and Plans.*

* Villeneuve in this followed the advice of Tourville. " I have already had the honour of telling the king," the illustrious Marshal wrote to the son of Colbert, " from the moment that two fleets are in presence, and in a position to see each other clearly, it is impossible to avoid a combat if the enemy wishes to engage, and is to windward. There would be no alternative but to abandon all the dull sailers; which cannot be done; for such a proceeding would intimidate the crews so much, that it would be difficult to give them confidence when it was necessary to fight. All flag officers, and those who have experience at sea, agree on this point, and that the best plan, even for an inferior force, is to await the enemy in good order, and with a firm front."

together, turned their heads towards Cadiz, which port by that means remained open for disabled ships. The line of battle was then formed upon the new tack, and the combined fleet awaited the enemy.

A light breeze from W. N. W. barely filled the sails; but Nelson's fleet, propelled by a heavy swell (certain symptom of an approaching gale), advanced at about the rate of a league an hour. It was divided into two squadrons, according to the plan laid down by Nelson. The Victory * led the first column, and had astern of her two ships of 98 guns, the Téméraire and the Neptune,—an imposing mass, destined to make the first breach through the enemy's line. The Conqueror and Leviathan, 74, followed the Neptune, and preceded the Britannia, 100, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral the Earl of Northesk. Separated from the first group by a considerable interval, Nelson's favourite ship, the Agamemnon, led on four ships,—the Ajax, Orion, Minotaur, and Spartiate. The Africa, 64, which had fallen to leeward during the night, was crowding sail to regain her station.

The Royal Sovereign, 100 guns, bearing the flag of Vice-Admiral Collingwood, led the second

* As several French and English ships bore the same names, the former and the Spanish are distinguished by italics.

column. Having been lately docked, that excellent ship had recovered her good sailing qualities, and sailed as well as a frigate. The Belleisle and Mars followed her with difficulty. The Tonnant and Bellerophon followed the Mars more closely. The Colossus, Achilles, and Polyphemus succeeded the Bellerophon. Something more to the right, the Revenge was followed by the Swiftsure, Defiance, Thunderer, and Defence; the Dreadnought and the Prince, 98, both bad sailers, were seen between the two British columns, but formed part of that commanded by Collingwood. United by one common feeling, though destined to be completely independent during the battle, these two divisions, the first of twelve ships, the second of fifteen, shared the noble emulation of their chiefs, and displayed equal ardour in closing with our force.

The combined fleet, composed of eighteen French ships of 80 and 74 guns, and of fifteen Spanish ships, among which were four three-deckers, reckoned six ships more, but three first-rates less than the English.* Six flag officers com-

* On the 13th of August, 1805, the emperor wrote to Décrès, "Villeneuve will see, by my calculation, that I wish him always to attack when in superior numbers, counting two Spanish ships as one." We appeal to the recollection of those who served at that time, even among our enemies, could any other basis be fairly taken in comparing the force of the two fleets about to engage?

manded the divisions of the fleet. Villeneuve's flag was flying in the *Bucentaure*, Admiral Gravina's in the *Principe de Asturias*, of 112 guns, Rear-Admiral Dumanoir's in the *Formidable*, Rear-Admiral Magon's in the *Algesiras*, and two

The English fleet carried - - -	2148 guns.
The French - - - -	1356
The Spanish - - - -	1270
Combined force - - -	2626

The *real* force of the combined fleet, according to Napoleon's calculations (which unfortunately cannot be taxed with timidity), would not be called more than 1991 guns, 156 guns, or two 80-gun ships less than the English. Would that we had had on that terrible day but twenty-five such ships as the Fougeux, Pluton, Algesiras, or Redoutable!

With reference to the above note, we should be unwilling to take from the French any comfort which they may derive from tracing their defeat upon this occasion to other circumstances than those which history has recorded; but we really cannot sanction this strange computation of force. If the inferiority of the Spanish ships be a reason for striking off half their numbers, the same argument will apply to the French, in a less degree, or to any fleet inferior in efficiency. How would French critics judge English military writers if they followed this plan? If, for instance, in our Peninsular battles we called a Spanish auxiliary force of 40,000 men 20,000, on the ground (and the very tenable ground) that they were only equal to half that number of well trained English or French soldiers. M. Thiers boldly asserts that the British actually *had* as many guns at Trafalgar as the French; an assertion utterly untrue, as a very simple addition of figures must have shown him that the latter had 474 more; but, if M. de la Graviere's or Buonaparte's method of calculating force be acceded to, *arithmetic* can no longer be any guide to us in numbering the guns of a fleet. We shall require to know the *quality* of the combatants in every case.— *Translator's note.*

magnificent Spanish three-deckers, the *Santissima Trinidad*, of 130 guns, and the *Santa Ana*, of 112, displayed, amidst this forest of masts, the first, the flag of Rear-Admiral Cisneros, the second, that of Vice-Admiral Alava.

Impeded in its movements by the calm and swell, this immense fleet, which was then extended over five or six miles, presented an irregular line to the enemy. Ten ships having fallen to leeward, were out of their stations, and formed, as it were, a second line beyond the line of battle. The *Neptune*, *Scipion*, *Intrépide*, *Rayo*, *Formidable*, *Duguay-Trouin*, *Mont Blanc*, *San Francisco de Asis*, *San Augustino*, and *Héros*, formed the van squadron, under Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. The three first ships of the main body were stationed near the *Bucentaure*; the *Santissima Trinidad* a-head; the *Redoutable* astern of the Admiral; the *Neptune* to leeward of the line, between the *Redoutable* and the *Bucentaure*. Astern of this group was a long interval, which should have been occupied by three ships that had got to leeward, the *San Leandro*, *San Justo*, and *Indomptable*. This breach in the living wall appeared to have divided the line of defence at the moment of attack, leaving fourteen ships on Villeneuve's side, and nineteen on that of Gravina. The

Santa Ana was at the head of this second division, and astern of that three-decker was seen the élite of the French fleet—the *Pouguent*, separated by one Spanish ship, the *Monarca*, from the *Pluton*, *Algesiras*, *Aigle*, *Swiftsure*, and *Argonaute*, separated from the *Algesiras* by the *Bahama*. Astern of these nine ships, a last group comprised two more French ships and five Spanish, the *Montañez* and *Argonauta* to leeward; the *Berwick*, followed by the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, the *Achille*, *San Ildefonso*, and *Principe de Asturias*, intended by Villeneuve to lead the van, but which had become, from circumstances having reversed the line of battle, the rear ship of the combined fleet.

The combined fleet was then eight or nine leagues from Cadiz, and Nelson desired, above all things, to cut them off from that port. Had he cut through Villeneuve's line of battle he would have succeeded. A similar movement had been attempted by Lord Howe in the battle of the 1st of June, but with infinite caution. Being to windward of the fleet commanded by Villaret Joyeuse, Lord Howe, after getting abreast of the enemy's line, had attacked the Republican fleet obliquely, and not end on. Threatening Villaret's rear at first, he had gradually altered his course, and brought his ships down in a

slanting direction upon the French. There was, at that time, no tactician who would have dared to act otherwise; nor any officer who would not have agreed with Mr. Clark, a writer pensioned by England, that a fleet steering at right angles for another fleet, would infallibly have been disabled. Nelson, no doubt, appreciated the evils of this plan of attack as well as any one; but he reckoned on the inexperience of his adversaries, and instinctively choosing the shortest, if not safest, way of arriving at his object, unhesitatingly exposed his own and Collingwood's ship to the fire of a whole fleet, to open a passage for the rest.

As soon as he had seen his orders faithfully executed, and the English fleet formed in two columns, bearing down under all sail upon our ships, Nelson retired to his cabin, and taking up the journal in which he had noted, the same morning, the last movements of his squadron, he, on his knees, wrote in it this short prayer: "May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may his bless-

ing light upon my endeavours to serve my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen, amen, amen." After having performed this religious act, Nelson, a blind lover, thought he fulfilled another duty, in bequeathing, by a codicil added to his will, Lady Hamilton and her daughter Horatia to the gratitude of England.* Thus prepared for death, he returned on deck, where the captains of the frigates whom he had summoned were awaiting his orders. He approached Captain Blackwood, commanding the Euryalus, who, with Captain Hardy, shared his affection and confidence. "The captains of our frigates shall see the enemy very close to-day," said he, "for I intend to keep them in the Victory as long as possible." Nelson, according to

* This double legacy of Nelson's was repudiated by England, because an unjust reprobation confounded in the same oblivion the sole offspring of a hero and the odious woman who had soiled his glory; but the lawful heirs of the conqueror of Trafalgar received splendid proofs of their country's munificence. Parliament granted, on the motion of the ministry, a pension of 2000*l.* a year to his widow. A sum of 5000*l.* a year was settled upon the title in perpetuity, and a further sum of 120,000*l.* was granted for the purchase of an estate; while the earldom was settled upon Nelson's elder brother and 12,000*l.* was granted to each of his sisters. The yearly income corresponding to these various grants, at 5 per cent., would be 14,000*l.*

The parentage here assumed for Horatia Thompson is by no means generally admitted in England. Indeed, to the contrary, very few believe it. — *Translator's note.*

Captain Blackwood's testimony, appeared at this moment calm and resolved, but more serious than usual. Often remarking the bold front of the combined fleet, he expressed regret that it had gone on that tack, and appeared anxiously to watch the threatening horizon, and the altered position of the enemy's fleet, now, by Villeneuve's movement, approaching the dangerous reefs of Conil and Santi Petri, instead of the Straits of Gibraltar. About eleven o'clock Nelson went round the different decks, where the men were at their quarters, and complimented the officers on their arrangements, addressed some words of encouragement to the captains of the guns, and recovering all his confidence at the sight of their sturdy figures and muscular arms, only thought of giving Collingwood the signal to engage.

That signal was brief and precise: it intimated Nelson's intention of cutting through the enemy's van, to prevent them reaching Cadiz, and told Collingwood to cut through twelve ships from the enemy's rear; and while the Royal Sovereign prepared to execute this order, he ordered the Victory to be steered for the Santissima Trinidad, the eleventh ship from our van. By this double movement he was about to attack, not twelve ships with sixteen, but twenty-three with twenty. "I want, at least, twenty ships of that fleet," he

had said to Captain Blackwood, in that excitement which he always experienced at the approach of battle; "fewer ships would not make a victory." But for his fear that Villeneuve might escape into Cadiz, leaving him an incomplete triumph, it is probable that Nelson, more faithful to his original design, would have conducted this attack less imprudently. We may still more readily believe that he would not, in addition to bearing down on the combined fleet perpendicularly, have recklessly incurred the still greater danger (with a light and uncertain breeze) of attacking in two columns. But the ardour of his mind prevailed at the moment over all tactical considerations. Any new evolution would have lost time, and as regards danger, the greatest, in his eyes, was allowing Villeneuve to escape from him as he had from Calder. What an opportunity, however, did his impetuosity afford us! All seemed to indicate that Nelson would see his advanced ships crushed by our masses, like cavalry who, to force a square, instead of charging together, should divide, and charge separately.*

* "This disregard of established rules in the mode of approaching an enemy, arose entirely out of peculiar circumstances. It may be considered as the result of the decline in European navies, which had taught us to relax our system and despise the lessons of prudence."—*Treatise on Naval Gunnery, by Sir Howard Douglas.*

The fleets were now but a few miles from each other, and Nelson, standing on the poop of the Victory, had made signal to his fleet to prepare to anchor that night. "Do you not think," he then said, to the captain of the Euryalus, "that some other signal is wanting?" He seemed to reflect for some minutes, and then calling the signal lieutenant, said, "Mr. Pasco, make signal to the squadron, that England expects every man will do his duty." Every one knows with what enthusiasm this celebrated message was received—what fresh vigour and supernatural ardour it infused into the ranks of the British fleet. "Now," said Nelson, "I can do no more; we must trust to the great Disposer of all Events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty." Captain Blackwood then, concerned at the danger which Nelson was obliged to incur, and at the sinister presentiment which seemed to possess him, ventured to urge that, for the general good, he should transfer his flag to the Euryalus, or, at least, to another ship in a less exposed position than he had chosen for the Victory. "No, Blackwood," replied the Admiral, "on such occasions it is the commander-in-chief's duty to set the example." Feigning, however, to yield to the entreaties of others, he allowed the order to be given to the

Téméraire, Neptune and Leviathan to take the lead; but very soon after, by making more sail on the Victory, he rendered the execution of the order impossible. At the moment when this last action evinced the increasing impatience of the commander-in-chief, the Royal Sovereign showed no external symptoms of imitating the example. That ship, whose superior sailing excited Nelson's envy at the moment, seemed to await, under easy sail, for the ship she had left astern; but, notwithstanding this apparent prudence, Collingwood had taken his own measures to ensure himself the honour of striking the first blow. Hardly had the Belleisle and Mars approached him, when, at a wave from Collingwood's hand (the signal impatiently awaited), her studding-sails expanded in the air, and the Royal Sovereign, leaving the British columns far astern, appeared singly to throw herself upon the enemy.

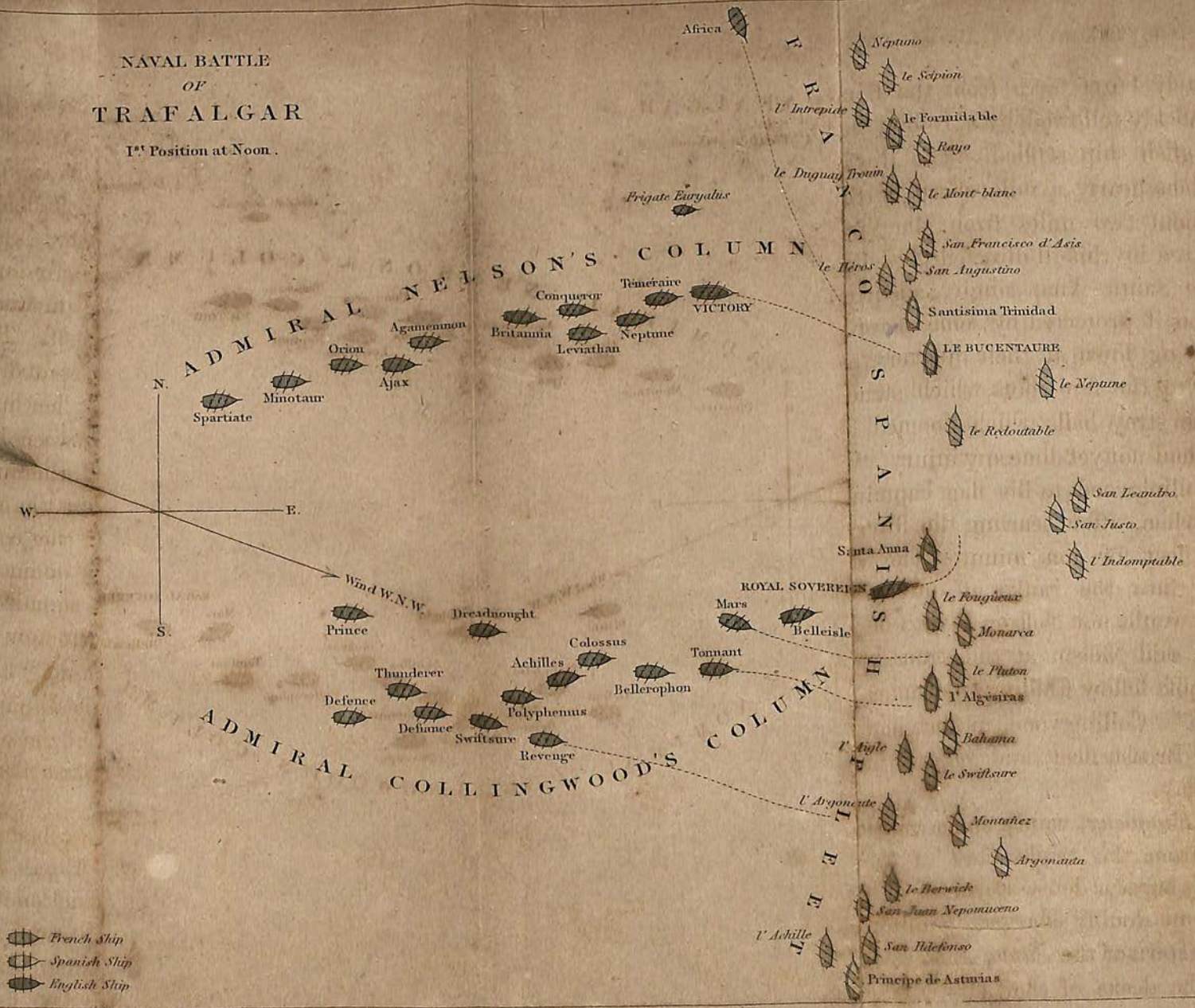
It was noon. The flag of St. George, white with the red cross, was flying along the English line, while with reiterated cries of "Vive l'Empereur," the French fleet hoisted the tricolour; the Spaniards, at the same time, displaying the banner of Castille, and suspending a large wooden cross beneath it. At this moment Villeneuve gave the signal of battle. A single gun aimed at the Royal Sovereign im-

mediately burst forth from the Fougueux, and was quickly followed by a rolling fire, to which no English ship replied. The Royal Sovereign was then nearly a mile ahead of the Belleisle, and about two miles from the Victory. Still uninjured by this ill-directed fire, she bore down on the Santa Ana, singly, silently, unswervingly, as if protected by some secret spell. The crew lying down at their quarters, presented no object to the few shots which struck her hull, and the stray balls which boomed between her masts had not yet done any injury. "Rotheram," said Collingwood to his flag captain at the moment when, after bearing the fire of the combined fleet for ten minutes, he was about to plunge into the ranks of our rear squadron, "what would not Nelson give to be here now?" "See," said Nelson at the same instant, "how that noble fellow Collingwood takes his ship into action!" Collingwood, in fact, had led the way for the British fleet, and reaped the first fruits of the day.

The *Fougueux*, vainly endeavoured to bar the way; from the triple tiers of the Royal Sovereign, burst a dense storm of shot and smoke. Each gun doubly charged, poured its contents into the stern of the *Santa Ana*, 150 cannon balls swept the decks of that ship, and left 400 men

NAVAL BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

1st. Position at Noon.



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stretched upon them. The Royal Sovereign, then ranging up to leeward, engaged the Spanish Vice-Admiral yard-arm to yard-arm; but she soon had other enemies to contend with. The *San Leandro*, *San Justo*, and *Indomptable*, closed up to surround her. The *Fougueux* opened obliquely upon her, and her sails were soon in shreds. Nevertheless, in the midst of that hail-storm of shot which were seen striking each other in the air*, the Royal Sovereign did not less furiously cannonade the enemy she had singled out. The Spaniard's fire slackened, and above the clouds of smoke which enveloped the heroic group. Nelson's anxious eye could still distinguish the lofty flag of Collingwood.

The wind, however, had already failed the English fleet. The Victory hardly going a knot and a half, advanced slowly towards the *Santissima Trinidad* and the *Bucentaure*, while Collingwood, alone, in the midst of the combined fleet, kept the ships which assailed him at bay. At twenty minutes after noon the Victory had at last arrived within gunshot of our fleet. A first shot fired by the *Bucentaure* fell short of her; a second fell alongside; a third passed above her hammock-nettings; another, better aimed,

* Admiral Collingwood's Correspondence.

passed through the main-top-sail. When Nelson called Captain Blackwood to him: "Return to your frigate," said he, "and remind all our ships as you pass them, that I reckon on their exertions; and that if by the mode of attack prescribed, they find it impracticable to get into action immediately, they may adopt whatever they think best, provided it leads them quickly and closely alongside an enemy." While saying this, he led the captain of the Euryalus to the break of the poop. Blackwood seized the Admiral's hand, and with a faltering voice, expressed the hope "that he should soon see him again in possession of twenty captured ships." "God bless you, Blackwood," replied Nelson; "but I shall never speak to you again."

One or two minutes of impressive silence followed the last gun fired by the *Bucentaure*. The gunners adjusted their aim, and as if by a signal given, the six or seven ships nearest Villeneuve opened their fire at once upon the Victory. The swell which took our ships upon the broadside, gave them an irregular roll, which added to the uncertainty of their practice. The shots which did not fall short of the Victory passed over her, or lost themselves in her rigging, and she had already arrived within 500 yards of the *Bucentaure*, with little damage. A better directed

shot then cut away her mizen-topmast; another knocked her wheel to pieces, and a double-headed shot killed eight marines on the poop; for Nelson, less provident than Collingwood, had allowed his crew to stand up at their quarters, instead of making them lie down. Another shot passed between Nelson and Captain Hardy; when the former observed with a smile, "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long." During forty minutes the Victory * had borne the fire of the whole squadron, and that ship, which nothing could have saved from utter destruction, had our gunners been better, had, as yet, but fifty men disabled †; two hundred pieces of ordnance thundering against him had been unable to arrest his course: borne majestically along by the swell which lifted and impelled her forward, the Victory steered slowly for Villeneuve's flag-ship; but the line was closed up at his approach; the *Redoutable* had frequently grazed the taff-rail of the *Bucentaure;* the *Santissima Trinidad* had hove-to ahead of that ship; the *Neptune* had closed her to leeward. A collision appeared

* From twelve to twenty minutes to one.

† "I sent for several captains of guns on the quarter-deck," said the captain of the *Redoutable*, in a report to the Minister of Marine, after the battle, "to point out to them how badly our ships fired; all the shot fell too low. I desired them to aim at the masts."

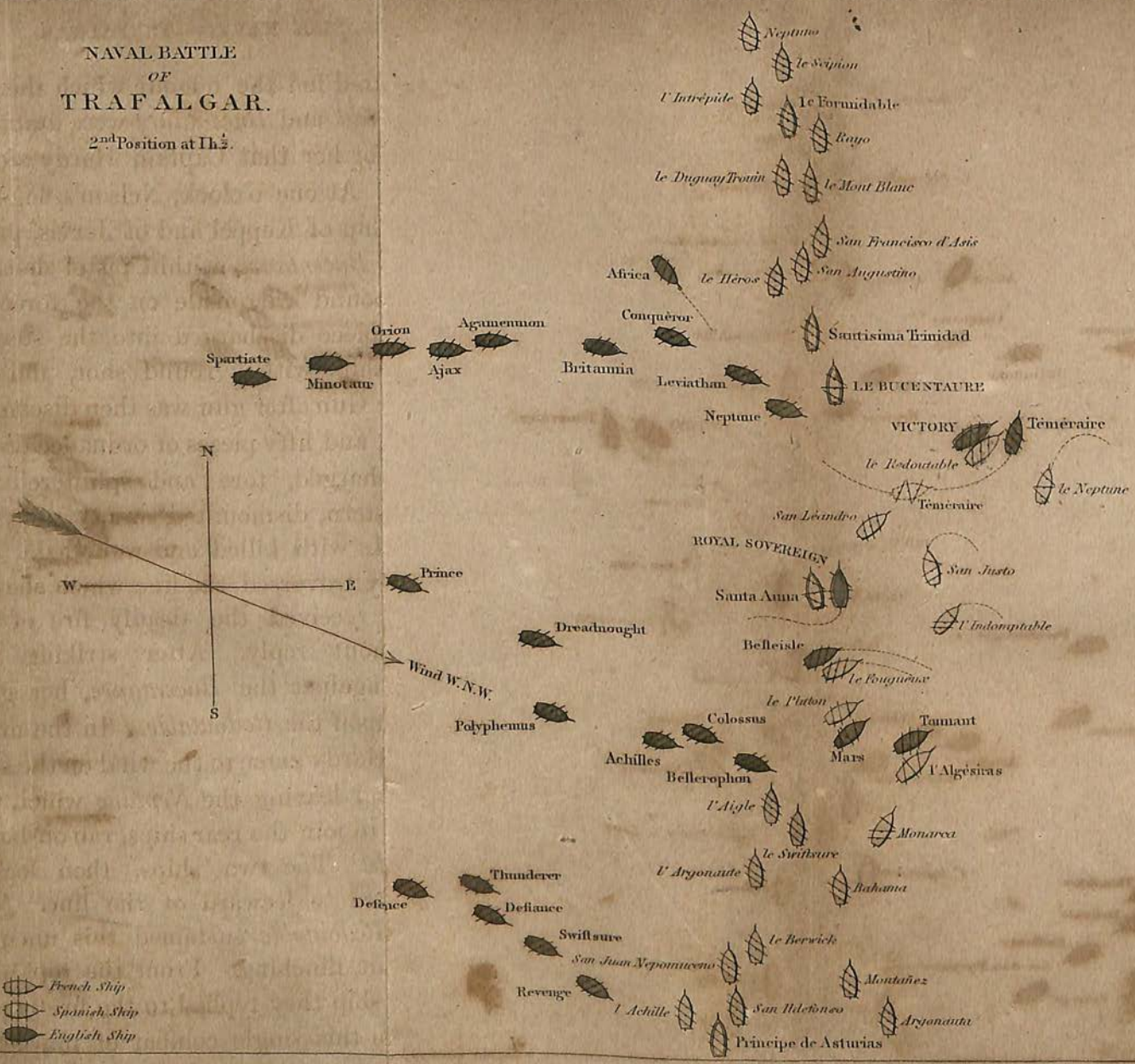
inevitable. Villeneuve, at this moment, seized the eagle * belonging to his ship, and displayed it to the sailors who surrounded him. "My friends," he exclaimed, "I am going to throw it on board the English ship: we will follow and recover it, or perish in the attempt." Our sailors answered these noble words with loud acclamations. Full of hope for the issue of a combat hand-to-hand, Villeneuve, before the smoke had shrouded the *Bucentaure* from the view of the squadron, addressed this last signal to his ships: "Every ship not in action is out of her station, and must take any position which shall more quickly bring her under fire." His duty as admiral was terminated; it only remained for him to prove himself the bravest captain in his fleet.

Hardy, meanwhile, had discovered the impossibility of breaking our line, without running on board of one of our ships, and had informed Nelson of the fact. "We cannot help it," replied the Admiral: "choose which you please, I leave it to you." The wretched appearance of the *Redoutable* an inferior 74, recently refitted at

* "It must be inferred from this, that Napoleon's ships, like his regiments, had the eagle in addition to their colours; but we do not remember, amongst the numerous ships captured, to have heard of one where such trophy was found." — *Translator's note.*

NAVAL BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.

2nd Position at 1h½.



R. Addard Sc.

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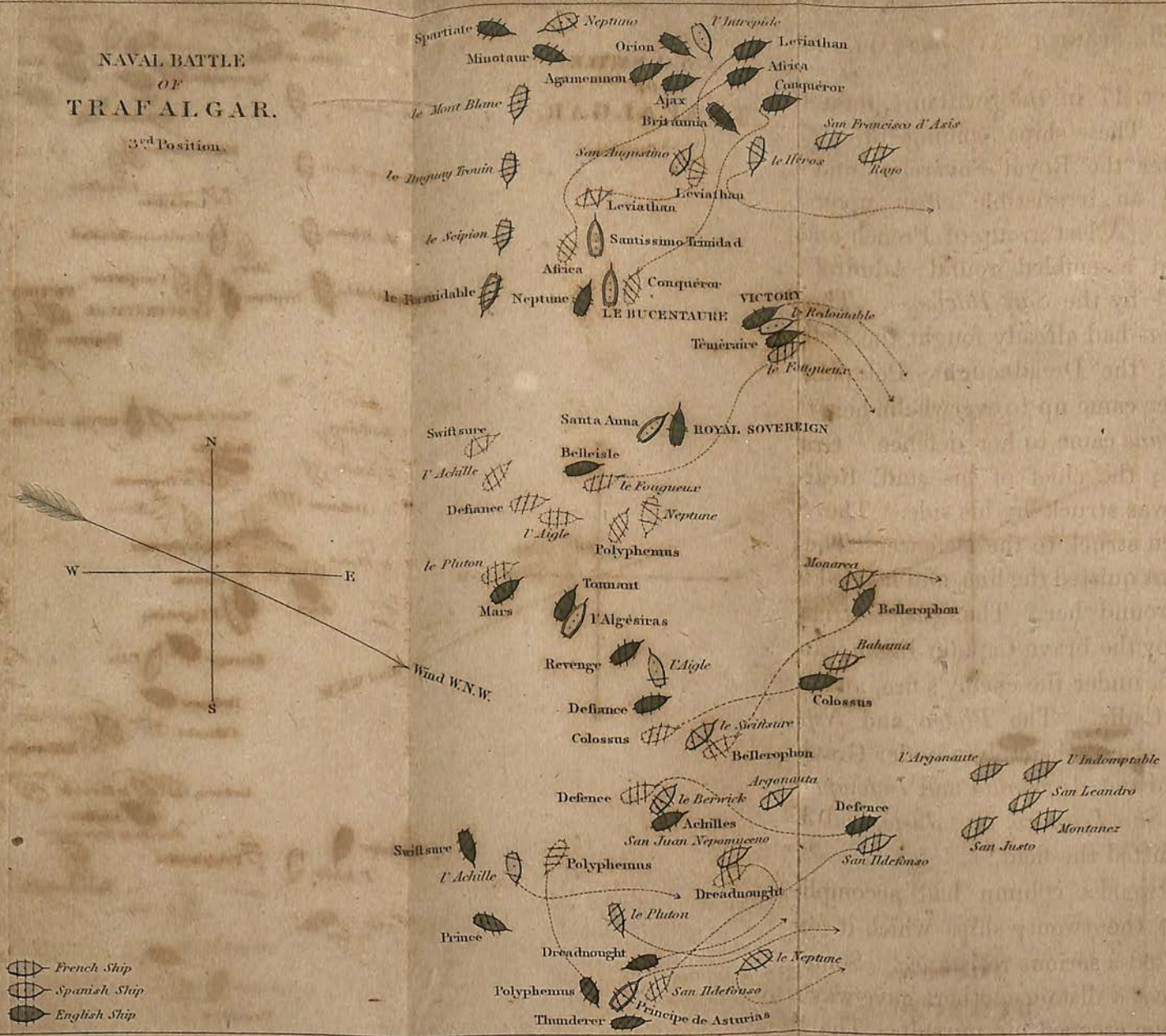
NAVAL BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.

3rd Position.



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Ferrol, procured her the honour which the *Santissima Trinidad* and *Bucentaure* were ambitious of. It was for her that Captain Hardy steered the Victory. At one o'clock, Nelson's flag-ship, the old flag-ship of Keppel and of Jervis, passed astern of the *Bucentaure*, within pistol shot. A sixty-eight pound carronade on the forecastle was the first piece discharged into the stern of the French ship, with a round shot, and 500 musket balls. Gun after gun was then discharged in succession, and fifty pieces of ordnance doubly and trebly charged, tore and splintered the *Bucentaure's* stern, dismounted twenty guns, and filled her decks with killed and wounded. The Victory slowly traversed the line which she had broken, and received the deadly fire of the *Neptune* without reply. After striking this mortal blow against the *Bucentaure*, her guns were turned upon the *Redoutable*. In the midst of the smoke Hardy came to the wind on the starboard tack, and leaving the *Neptune* which was endeavouring to join the rear ships, ran on board the *Redoutable*. The two ships, then locked together, drifted to leeward of the line. The crew of the *Redoutable* sustained this unequal contest without flinching. From the tops and decks of that ship they replied to the fire of the English, and in this single combat of musketry

rather than artillery, our sailors regained the advantage.* In a few minutes the gangways and quarter-deck of the Victory were heaped with slain. Of the 110 men on the deck of that ship at the commencement of the action, scarce twenty were left unwounded, and the cock-pit was crowded with the dying and wounded who were carried down every moment. At the sight of so many victims, the English surgeons, unequal to the demand made upon their strenuous exertions, thought the day was lost. The chaplain of the Victory, distracted by emotion, wished to fly from that scene of horror "those shambles," as after many years had passed, he still called that dark place, deprived of fresh air and streaming with blood. He rushed on deck, and through the smoke recognised Nelson and Captain Hardy walking together on the quarter-deck. Not far from them some men were exchanging a sharp

* There was no musketry in the tops of the Victory. Ever since he had witnessed the explosion of the *Alcide* and *Orient*, Nelson had considered a fire the greatest danger in a naval battle. Before the commencement of the action, he had the hammock cloths of the Victory carefully wetted, the men's bags, and, in a word, all that was inflammable. It was to that conviction that the absence of musketry in the Victory's tops was principally owing. Nelson feared lest some clumsiness or accidental explosion should set fire to the tops, and cause the worst possible disaster. It was this very accident which befel a French ship, the *Achille*, in this battle.

fire of musketry with those in the Redoutable's tops, when suddenly the Admiral tottered and fell with his face to the deck. A musket ball from the French ship's mizen-top, had passed downwards through his left epaulette and lodged in the spine: the chaplain ran to him; but a serjeant and two sailors had already reached him and lifted him off the deck covered with the blood which stained it. Hardy, who had not heard the noise of his fall, turned round, and, pale and more stricken than Nelson himself, exclaimed, "I hope you are not dangerously wounded, my lord?" "They have done for me at last, Hardy!" was Nelson's reply; "my back-bone is shot through." The sailors who lifted him up, carried him in their arms to the cock-pit, where he was left amidst a crowd of wounded.

The breeze almost destroyed by the heavy cannonade, had at this time (a quarter past one), when Nelson was wounded, brought but five English ships into action. In the rear, the Royal Sovereign had contended singly against her numerous foes for fifteen minutes. The next ship after her, the Belleisle, had cut through the line at half-past twelve, astern of the Santa Ana; but, already much injured by the raking broadsides she had received, having lost her

mizen-mast by the Fougueux's fire, she found herself encircled by her enemies! Shortly, however, the English ships arrived in force in that part. The Mars attacked the *Pluton*; the Tonnant attacked the *Algesiras*; the Bellerophon, Colossus, and Achilles, broke through the line. The Dreadnought 98, and Polyphemus 64, followed at a distance under all sail. The Revenge, Swiftsure, Defiance, Thunderer, and Defence, diverged to the right to double the combined rear, placing it between two fires. It was already a general action in this part of the line, while it was a series of single combat in the centre and van. There, in fact, Dumanoir, with his ten ships, formed a reserve which the English did not think of attacking. The *Bucentaure* and *Santissima Trinidad* cannonaded the Téméraire, Neptune, and Leviathan, from a distance as they bore down. The *Redoutable*, alone, struggling with the Victory, pressed her with renewed vigour. The deck of the latter ship was cleared, and from the mizen-top of the *Redoutable*, Captain Lucas was informed of it. He called the boarders, and in less than a minute, the gangways of the French ship were covered with armed men, who rushed on the poop, upon the hammock nettings and shrouds. The gunners of the Victory abandoned their guns to repulse

this new danger; but being received by a storm of grenades and a heavy fire of musketry, they soon fell back in disorder; but the superior height of the Victory still protected them, and the *Redoutable's* sailors vainly attempted to scale her sides. Captain Lucas then ordered the slings of the mainyard to be cut, and wished to use it as a bridge between the two ships. At this moment, the midshipman Yon, and four sailors by the aid of the Victory's spare anchor, had reached the deck of the English ship. They pointed out this road to their companions. The columns of boarders were re-formed in haste; the second lieutenant of the *Redoutable*, Lieutenant Dupotet *, placing himself at their head, inspired them with his own ardour; a few minutes more and the Victory was ours.† It was then that the terrific volley of round and grape shot swept the deck of the *Redoutable*. The Téméraire, after breaking through the line, had thrown herself across her bows, and 200 men were destroyed by that first broadside. The Téméraire then fell on board of the French ship, and plied her with her guns. The *Redoutable*, enclosed between two three-deckers, still struggled in

* Now Vice-Admiral.

† One of those contretemps with which the perversity of fate has always delighted to torment Frenchmen!—*Translator's note.*

that fearful extremity. Her dismounted guns, her stern torn to pieces, her fallen mainmast, her "chains" on fire, had not intimidated Captain Lucas; but the Neptune and the Leviathan had also cut through the line, and all resistance became vain. At fifty-five minutes after one, Captain Lucas surrendered to the enemy a ship shattered to pieces, and the remains of a crew which at that moment reckoned 522 men *hors de combat.* "Never could the intrepid Nelson have fallen in action with foes more worthy of his courage." *

Held together by their fallen masts, which lay from one ship upon the other, the Victory, *Redoutable*, and Téméraire drifted together towards the rear. Arriving within 100 yards of the *Fougueux*, the Téméraire fired her starboard guns at that ship, and the *Fougueux* (worthy rival of Redoutable), notwithstanding the contest she had sustained with the Royal Sovereign and Belleisle, did not hesitate to close with the Téméraire. Though mortally wounded, the brave captain, Bandouin, a hero, simple and modest (whose name France has forgotten, and England would have preserved in Westminster Abbey), encouraged his crew from the poop, where he had fallen; but he vainly strove against the

* Report of Captain Lucas.

hand of death. He expired, too happy in not surviving the capture of his ship; for this new conflict was too unequal. The second captain of the *Fougueux* was wounded, and 400 men disabled. The English threw themselves into the main rigging of the *Fougueux*, and gaining possession of the deck, hauled down the French colours.

At the moment when the *Fougueux* and *Redoutable* succumbed to the English three-deckers, the *Santa Ana*, which had lost her three lower masts half an hour before, struck to Collingwood's flag-ship, the first victory gained by the rear. The English had encountered an unexpected resistance in this part of the line. The Belleisle, isolated in the midst of the French ships, after having repulsed the *Fougueux*, had withstood the fire of the *Achille*, *Aigle* and *Neptune*, and though entirely dismasted, and, as it were, buried under that heap of sails and rigging, the English colours were still kept flying on the stump of her mizen-mast. She bore our broadsides without being able to answer them; but succour soon came from all sides. The Polyphemus interposed between her and the *Neptune;* the Defiance protected her from the fire of the *Aigle*. The Swiftsure, giving her three cheers, hastened to close with the *Achille*. To windward of these ships a terrible

contest was going on between the Mars and the *Pluton*, between the Tonnant and *Algesiras*. The Mars saw her captain slain by a round shot; the *Pluton*, bearing the broad pennant of the brave captain Cosmao*, prepared to attempt boarding when a new group of English ships obliged him to retire. The *Algesiras*, laid on board by the Tonnant, showed herself equally worthy of the high reputation; but the position of the Tonnant gave the English ship too great an advantage, for, with her bowsprit caught in the shrouds of the Tonnant, the *Algesiras* could not use her guns, and received a ceaseless, raking fire. Rear-Admiral Magon, anxious to lead his crew on board the English ship, rallied them under this murderous fire, and fought with them in the first rank. Though already wounded in the arm and thigh, he refused to quit the deck; but yielded at last to the entreaties of his officers: two sailors had taken him up, when a splinter struck him on the breast: he died after the foremast was shot away, and almost at the same instant a fire broke out in the cockpit, and the remaining masts covered the deck in their fall. The flag-captain Letourneur, and Lieut. de vaisseau Plassan had been severely wounded, but

* The sailors of the *Pluton* had surnamed their captain "*Va de bon Cœur*" (go forward heartily), a glorious title, which he merited and retained throughout the war.

a young officer, whom death had spared for a happier lot in war *, M. Botherel de la Bretonnière, prolonged this heroic defence for a few minutes, until the English seamen had carried the upper deck of the *Algesiras*. In the midst of the confusion produced by the fall of her three lower masts, they took possession of a ship entirely disabled.

Not far from the *Algesiras*, four French ships, the *Aigle*, *Swiftsure*, *Berwick*, and *Achille* sustained a desperate conflict with equal courage. After engaging the Bellerophon yard-arm to yard-arm for near an hour, the *Aigle* separated, against her will, from an enemy whom she had almost subdued by the fire of her musketry †, had steered for the Belleisle, but deprived of her brave commander, the gallant Captain Gourrege, she succumbed, at half-past three, to the combined attack of the Revenge and Defiance.

The Swiftsure had lost 250 men; the intrepid and brilliant officer who worked the ship under Captain Villemadrin, Lieut. de vaisseau Aune, fell at his post: he was the third who had been

* Mons. Botherel de la Bretonnière, now a rear-admiral, commanded the Breslau at the battle of Navarino.

† The French author errs in supposing that a line-of-battle ship is "*subdued*," by musketry, though her upper deck, like the Victory's, may be cleared by it. Had the Redoutable actually boarded the Victory, she would have found this.—*Translator's note.*

killed. The Swiftsure was at last overwhelmed by the Bellerophon and Colossus.

The *Berwick*, commanded by the gallant Captain Camas, as an English writer justly calls him*, fought the Defence and Achilles successively, and with the same ardour, notwithstanding the fall of his masts. Fifty-one dead bodies cumbered his quarters, and two hundred wounded had been carried below. Captain Camas received a mortal wound. His second in command, Lieut. de vaisseau Guichard, survived him but a few minutes, and the *Berwick* then fell into the hands of the English.

The *Achille* was the first to assail the Belleisle: she found herself surrounded in her turn; the *Polyphemus*, disengaged from the Neptune, which had gone to the rear of the line, the Swiftsure and Prince, 98, crushed her with the weight of their fire. The Commandant Deniéport, already wounded in the thigh, was killed at his station which he would not abandon. The foremast, half consumed by the fire which had burst out in the top, was soon brought down by the enemy's shot, and fell upon the deck, which was strewed with its burning mass. The *Achille*, a prey to the flames, saw no friendly ship near her; the greater part of her officers were killed or wounded,

* James's Naval History.

and an enseigne de vaisseau took the place of Captain Deniéport. The intrepid Cauchard, sole survivor of an heroic staff, fought without hope, but fought still. The fear of a frightful explosion at last drove the English ships away, and the *Achille*, with nothing to contend with but the flames, struggled vainly with her fate. About half-past five this glorious ship, whose flag had not been struck, blew up, with a portion of her crew.

Long before this dreadful accident the most complete confusion prevailed in the rear division. Cut through at all points, that part of the line only presented a confused mass of ships surrounded, and ready to yield to numbers. The *Monarca*, at first attacked by the Tonnant, succumbed to the fire of the Bellerophon. The *Bahama* surrendered to the Colossus. The *Argonauta*, crushed by the first broadside of the Achilles, was constrained to strike her flag to the fresh foes which beset her. The *San Juan Nepomuceno* was captured by the Dreadnought. Seven French, and five Spanish ships had already yielded, but ten English ships had dearly paid for these first advantages. The Victory reckoned 159 men disabled, the Royal Sovereign 141, the Téméraire 123, the Mars and Colossus a less considerable number. The first of these two last

named ships, in her engagement with the *Pluton*, had 98 men killed or wounded; the second 200, in her successive conflicts with the *Argonauta**, commanded by Captain Epron, the *Bahama*, and *Swiftsure*. The taking of the *Algesiras* had cost the Tonnant 76 men; the Bellerophon, while alongside the *Aigle*, had lost 150 men, and her captain was mortally wounded. The Belleisle, though completely dismasted, had suffered less than the Bellerophon and Colossus, her number of killed and wounded being 126: the Achilles had 72, the Defiance 70, the Revenge 79. Such were the English ships which had borne the brunt of the action; the greater part floated dismantled in the midst of the conquered, inert and helpless masses, incapable of engaging in a new combat; but an imposing reserve ranged over the scene of action at this moment, and reaped the fruits of their victory. In Collingwood's column alone, though that column was more seriously engaged than Nelson's, this reserve was composed of six ships, still almost intact. Two three-deckers,—the Dreadnought, which had but 33 men injured by our fire; the Prince, which had not a single one; three 74's and one 64, which, at the end of the day, had lost but 36 killed and wounded in the Defence, 16 in the

* The *Argonauta*, while under fire, had 160 men disabled.

Thunderer, 17 in the Swiftsure, 6 in the Polyphemus. These ships, coming into action three hours after the Royal Sovereign and Belleisle, produced an irresistible effect upon the rear squadron. A last group of French and Spanish ships had assembled round Admiral Gravina, supported by the *San Ildefonso*. The *Principe de Asturias* had already fought the Defiance and Revenge; the Dreadnought, Polyphemus, and Thunderer came up to overwhelm her; the *Pluton* and *Neptune* came to her defence. Gravina was wounded; the chief of his staff, Rear-Admiral Escaño, was struck by his side. The *San Ildefonso* then struck to the Defence. The *Principe de Asturias* quitted the line, and hoisted the signal to rally round her. The *Themis* frigate, commanded by the brave Captain Jugau, came to her assistance, under the enemy's fire, and towed her towards Cadiz. The *Pluton* and *Neptune* unwillingly placed themselves under Gravina's flag, and joined the *Argonauta* and *Indomptable*, who, with the *San Leandro*, *San Justo*, and *Montañes*, slowly quitted the field.

Collingwood's column had accomplished its task. Of the twenty ships which it fought, ten had opposed a serious resistance. Some engaged at too great a distance, others gave way too soon. Eight alone escaped his pursuit. The left wing

of the combined fleet was dispersed or destroyed; but the right could still maintain the fight. There Dumanoir, as we have said, still possessed ten uninjured ships, and hardly a mile from that powerful reserve the *Bucentaure* and *Santissima Trinidad* were gloriously sharing the same dangers and repulsing the same attacks. The Neptune, 98, the Leviathan and Conqueror, 74's, and the African, 64, surrounded these two ships, and thundered against them with their artillery. Calm and resigned in the midst of the frightful disasters which he had foreseen, Villeneuve was nevertheless astonished that Dumanoir should so long hesitate, instead of flying to the rescue. From the commencement of the battle, the van division had had no other enemy to repel than a miserable 64, the Africa, which, having separated from the English fleet during the night, was obliged, in order to get to her station, to pass within gunshot of Dumanoir's division. Villeneuve, while he had still a mast on which to hoist a signal, ordered the van ships to wear together, and Dumanoir repeated the signal. At an earlier period, this signal might have restored the day; but time had advanced, and the fire of the *Bucentaure* and *Santissima Trinidad* already slackened, and shortly after their masts, like tall forest trees cut through near the ground,

were seen to tremble and fall—deplorable results of a moment's hesitation! Dumanoir, forced to witness the last struggles of these noble ships, anxiously calculated the time they may yet hold out; the van squadron, he could not doubt, would arrive too late to save them. It was near three o'clock before the light breeze allowed him to complete his evolution, and the ten ships of which the van division was composed divided into two equal squadrons. The *Scipion*, *Duguay-Trouin*, *Mont Blanc*, and *Neptune* followed the *Formidable*, and steered to windward of the line. The *San Francisco de Asis*, *San Augustino*, *Rayo*, of 100 guns, *Heros*, and *Intrépide* steered directly for the *Bucentaure*. The last five ships sought a shorter route than that pointed out by the *Formidable;* but all did not persevere in the generous effort. They found on the scene of action fresh, instead of exhausted enemies, ready to receive them. The Britannia, 100, the Ajax and Orion, 74's, and Agamemnon, 64, had had time to come up. On seeing this, the *Rayo* and *San Francisco*, after having suffered the fire of the Britannia for some time, hastened to retreat, and join Admiral Gravina's division. The *Heros*, who preceded them, continued her course, and an unequal struggle ensued. The brave Captain Poulain was killed in the commencement of the

action, and his ship, no longer animated by his presence, having lost thirty-four men, escaped with difficulty from the capture which threatened her. The *San Augustiño*, cannonaded by several English ships, was boarded and taken by the Leviathan; while at this moment the *Bucentaure* and *Santissima Trinidad*, completely dismasted, were at the mercy of the enemy. Villeneuve sought for a boat to carry him to another ship. "The *Bucentaure*," said he, "has done her work; mine is not yet accomplished;" but the shot which spared his life had not left him the means of obeying the last dictates of his courage, for there was no part of the *Bucentaure* which was not riddled by the enemy's fire, nor a single boat undestroyed. Her guns were dismounted, and covered by the wreck of the masts; 209 men, killed or dying, lay stretched upon the decks; and Villeneuve, yielding to fate, surrendered his ship to the Conqueror, 74. A boat from that ship, manned by four men, made her way through the wreck which surrounded the *Bucentaure*, and under a shower of projectiles which still poured from all quarters of the scene of action, arrived alongside. Captain Atcherley, commanding the Conqueror's marines, then conducted the commander-in-chief of the Franco-Spanish fleet on board the Mars.

Nelson, from his death-bed, heard the cheers

with which the Victory's crew announced the capture of the *Bucentaure*, and anxiously inquired for Captain Hardy. "Well, Hardy," said he, looking at him anxiously, "how goes the battle? How goes the day with us?" "Very well," replied Captain Hardy; "we have got twelve or fourteen of the enemy's ships in our possession; but five of their van have tacked, and show an intention of bearing down upon the Victory; I have, therefore, called two or three of our fresh ships round us, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing." "I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck, Hardy." "No, my lord," replied Captain Hardy, "there is no fear of that." Nelson then drew the captain of the Victory to his side, and whispered in his ear, "I am a dead man, Hardy; I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon. Listen, Hardy! When I am no more, cut off my hair, to give my dear Lady Hamilton. . . and do not throw my poor body into the sea!" Hardy then grasped the Admiral's hand, and, with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

Dumanoir had, at last, arrived abreast of the Victory, and found the *Bucentaure* taken possession of, the *Santissima Trinidad* subdued, and a whole hostile squadron surrounding those ships; the Spartiate and Minotaur, who had not fired a gun, the Agamemnon, Britannia, Orion, Ajax,

and Conqueror, which had hardly been engaged. In the rear six other English ships were also formed in line, to cover their prizes; the Victory and Téméraire, reinvigorated at this critical moment, had cleared themselves from the *Fougueux* and *Redoutable*, and re-opened their fire. "To bear down at this moment on the enemy," as Dumanoir wrote some days subsequently to the minister, "would have been an act of desperation, which could only have tended to increase our losses," — but which would have saved, we must add, the memory of the officer commanding the van. That van division, however, did not effect their retreat without fighting. The *Formidable* had her rigging much cut, her sails torn to shreds, sixty-five men killed or wounded, and four feet of water in her hold; the *Duguay-Trouin*, *Mont Blanc*, and *Scipion* were almost equally injured by the fire of the British. The *Neptuno*, being astern, was cut off by the Spartiate and Minotaur. Captain Valdes, who commanded the *Neptuno*, defended his ship for an hour, and only surrendered when completely dismasted. Intrepid allies and generous martyrs, rather than useful defenders of a foreign cause, the majority of Spanish officers nobly redeemed on that day some isolated acts of cowardice. Would that the vigour of their arms had been equal to their courage, and that the ships of Charles IV.

had been worthy of their captains! One French ship, the Intrépide, still resisted the English to leeward of the line. On that deserted arena, where no friendly flag was then flying, the brave Captain Infernet forgot that resistance was thenceforward useless; he repulsed the Leviathan and Africa, received the fire of the Agamemnon and Ajax, fought the Orion yard arm and yard arm, and, after losing his three masts, only struck to the Conqueror.

The victory of the English fleet was then complete, and Hardy, freed from all anxiety, wished to convey the assurance of it to the Admiral himself. He penetrated a second time through a blood-stained heap of killed and wounded, to where Nelson was lying. In that close and stifling atmosphere the hero was struggling with his last agony; his forehead bathed in perspiration, and his lower limbs already cold, he seemed merely to retain the last gasp of life that he might carry with him to the tomb the solace of a completed victory. Hardy, by informing him of the glorious issue of this great battle, seemed to put an end to his sufferings, and calm the departure of that energetic spirit. Nelson gave him some orders, in a dying voice, and, raising himself by a final effort, murmured, "Thank God, *I have done my duty!*" after which he fell back on his couch, and in a quarter of an

hour expired, without a struggle or a groan. The news was conveyed to Collingwood; and even in the intoxication of victory, it affected him with the most poignant grief; but the gravity of circumstances forbade his giving vent to his sorrow. Of the thirty-three French and Spanish ships who on that morning so proudly offered battle to the English fleet, eleven were escaping towards Cadiz, four were following Dumanoir to seaward, eighteen had surrendered, shattered by the enemy's fire, and covered with glory. Ships thus defended were, doubtless, an important conquest, but a conquest ready to sink under the feet of the conquerors. The waves had already swallowed up the *Achille;* the *Redoutable* hardly floated; eight ships had not a mast standing; eight others were partially dismasted. In the English squadron, the Royal Sovereign, the Téméraire, Belleisle, Tonnant, Colossus, Bellerophon, Mars, and Africa, equally damaged, could hardly move; six other ships had lost either their yards or topmasts; the greater part had their sails in shreds. Cape Trafalgar, which gave its name to this great day, was eight or nine miles to leeward of the fleet; the dangers on the coast of Andalusia were hardly four or five, and the swell, rather than the wind, was driving the disabled ships towards the shore. The Royal Sovereign, which Colling-

wood had quitted, to transfer his flag to the Euryalus, had just sounded in thirteen fathoms. It was necessary — a new victory for Collingwood — that fourteen ships and four frigates, still in a condition to work, should extricate seventeen or eighteen disabled ships from this danger.

Nelson, foreseeing this inevitable result of a decisive contest, had declared his intention of riding out the gale which threatened, at anchor; and, on his death-bed, he had reminded Hardy of the necessity of anchoring as soon as the action should be over. But to anchor at that moment would have been to abandon each ship to her own resources, for those ships which had been most engaged, and were least able to make sail, were equally unable to anchor. The cannon-shot had respected nothing,—cutting the cables upon the decks, and shattering the anchors suspended at the bows or in the waist, as they had cut away masts and yards. The *Swiftsure*, the *San Ildefonso*, and *Bahama*, less damaged than the other prizes, were alone able to anchor under Cape Trafalgar. They were, also, the only trophies which the English succeeded in taking to Gibraltar. At midnight the tempest broke out in all its violence. Had not the wind then changed from W. to S.S.W., and by that change taken the fleet off the coast, all Collingwood's abilities would not have saved a single injured

ship from total destruction. But although the Admiral seized that moment to wear, yet, notwithstanding that happy chance, it required prodigious efforts, such as the veterans of Jervis and Nelson's school alone could make to get that fleet of disabled ships, more numerous than those which could assist them, clear of danger. Twenty-four hours after their victory, the English fleet had already lost five of the captured ships. The *Redoutable* foundered astern of the Swiftsure, which was towing her. The *Fougueux* was dashed upon the shore near Santi Patri. The *Aigle*, abandoned by the ships which escorted her, the *Bucentaure* and the *Algesiras*, retaken from the English by the remainder of their heroic crews, attempted to enter Cadiz.

The gale had hardly ended when Collingwood had a new danger to fear. On the 23d of October, by a trait of courage which showed his resolute character, Captain Cosmao, after so great a disaster, ventured again to sea, to brave the English squadron. Followed by two other French ships and two Spanish, five frigates, and two brigs, the *Pluton*, though making two feet of water in an hour, with a crew reduced to four hundred men, and with nine guns dismounted, stood out to encounter the English ships towing the *Neptuno* and *Santa Ana*, and obliged them to loose their prizes, which the

French frigates reconducted into harbour. Collingwood, fearing a new attack, determined to burn the *Intrépide* and *San Augustino*, and to sink the *Santissima Trinidad* and *Argonauta*. The *Monarca* and *Berwick*, which he hoped to save, were lost near San Lucar. The storm, however, which robbed the English fleet of those trophies did not inflict a less injury upon the remains of our force. The *Bucentaure*, at the moment of entering Cadiz, ran upon the rocks called the *Puercos*. The *Aigle* grounded outside Porto Real. The *Indomptable*, which, while anchored close to Cadiz, had received the crew of the *Bucentaure*, was also driven on the reefs off the village of Rota. The *San Francisco de Asis* was lost on the rocks under Fort St. Catherine. The Rayo, at the mouth of the Guadalquivir; and, as if the destiny which pursued the unhappy fleet of Villeneuve and Gravina was not yet satisfied, the four ships under Dumanoir were encountered and taken by four ships and four frigates under Sir Richard Strachan, after a brave resistance, on the 5th of November. On the 25th of October, Vice-Admiral Rosily arrived at Cadiz from Madrid, where, of the thirty-three ships he was to command, he only found five French and three Spanish. He hoisted his flag in the Heros, but did not change the fortune of the squadron. *None of the ships*

which had been under Villeneuve's flag ever returned to the ports of France. The *Heros*, *Neptune*, *Algesiras*, *Argonaute*, and *Pluton*, scanty remnant of that mighty fleet, constantly blockaded in Cadiz by an English force, fell into the hands of the Spanish insurgents in 1808.

Trafalgar marks the termination of a great maritime war. The battle of San Domingo, and the burning of our ships in the Isle d'Aix roads (Basque roads) by the fire-ships under Admiral Gambier and Lord Cochrane, came, indeed, to complete our discouragement at a later period. After the latter reverse, the naval war already dwindled away, was reduced, so far as the French were concerned, to a contest unworthy of a great nation. It only offered to our officers opportunities for desperate attempts to penetrate through a cloud of enemies compelled to do homage to their glorious daring, or for gallant enterprises, whose attractive history we have often listened to, and would wish to preserve as examples for our ardent youth, assuredly well worthy the task of avenging the defeats of our fathers. But while Napoleon launched these solitary adventurers upon the wide ocean, he was collecting on all sides the elements of a new navy. Fate, which pursued him without a respite, did not allow him time to reap the fruits of these new efforts. As for Spain, already prepared to de-

tach herself from our cause, she saw, after Trafalgar, her factitious navy return to the nullity, from whence a gigantic project had raised it for a moment.

Such were the consequences of this campaign, opened under the happiest auspices. When our ships raised the blockades of Cadiz and Ferrol; when England trembled for her West Indian colonies, and even for her own shores, who would have ventured to say that these first successes were preparing the way for so great a disaster, or that the campaign of England would end as that of Egypt began? Those two events, however, Trafalgar and Aboukir, explain each other; they are closely related, and complete the same drama; they are episodes in the life of one man, and two periods necessarily following in the history of the same navy. Since a first attack had taught us nothing, the same rashness might succeed again; the enemy had nothing to change in his tactics of attack since we had made no change in our method of defence. The genius of Nelson consisted in his perception of our weakness; the secret of his triumphs lay in attacking us. He was the first to destroy the prestige which still defended our ships, and the facility of his success emboldened him. We must not forget that before the battle of the Nile the superiority of

the English ships over our own had only been attested by trifling advantages; but that fatal day had the same consequences on the naval war that the campaigns of Italy had on the continental. From that epoch only do the rapid conquests and daring achievements of the English take the place of that nearly balanced fortune which had long attended the two navies. The enterprise of Nelson, like the military genius of Buonaparte, found emulous imitators; their triumphs raised on all sides young officers who burned to follow their example, and longed to show all Europe what could be done by those irresistible levers, —French soldiers and British ships.

The revolution in tactics which had been accomplished on the banks of the Po and Adige was thus about the same time inaugurated at the mouths of the Nile. On each side that revolution had been equally prepared. Buonaparte found the veteran soldiers of Schèrer ready; Nelson led the chosen ships of Jervis's fleet into action: but here the resemblance ends. Nelson had nothing of that profoundness in his views, or mathematical precision which distinguished the Emperor's school. An admiral who should adopt the very reverse of the illustrious chief's tactics, and should place his opponent in the same position that Nelson often placed himself, would have admirably prepared the defeat of his enemy. Between

ships equally efficient, to follow those eccentric tactics which were displayed in Nelson's practice, still more than his precepts, would we fearlessly assert, be to rush on inevitable ruin.*

In the relative circumstances of the two navies in 1798 and 1805, however, those rash attacks were calculated to make victory more decisive than it ever had been in maritime warfare. Nelson's *faults*, if we may give that name to those impulses which succeed, always turned to his advantage. The ships he allowed to be surrounded, or which he exposed unsupported to the enemy, endured without suffering too much injury all the weight of artillery, ill served and ill directed. The ships he seemed to forget in his rear, and which the least change of wind might have prevented from coming into action at all, furnished him with that which alone makes a victory complete and productive,—an imposing and unexpected reserve. Thus we may observe two very distinct phases in the great battles where Nelson commanded—the first, fluctuating and doubtful; the second, crushing and decisive; good gunners would assuredly

* This opinion, which some years ago would have been regarded as treason against Nelson's memory, is now, we believe, held by many British officers at the head of their profession. It does not, however, imply any censure on the illustrious admiral who adapted his tactics to the enemies he fought with.—*Translator's note.*

have modified the *dénouement* of these ill-fated dramas; because they would have destroyed the English fleet in the first act. Formed to grasp fortune by his daring rather than win her by his manœuvres, Nelson carried our squadrons, we may say, "with the bayonet." He was the Suwarrow, and not, as has been asserted, the Buonaparte, of the Seas.* The battles of Aboukir, and Trafalgar have overturned the olden ideas of naval tactics. Have they substituted rules of an infallible strategy, a strategy which it is the interest of our admirals to study? There are, doubtless, circumstances wherein they might profit by those daring examples. But those tactics, we think it has been sufficiently proved, can only be used by the strong against the weak—by veteran against unpractised navies—and it is not against such that we have to prepare—it is against an enemy who remembers the lessons of Nelson, and will be ready to practise them again

* To close with the enemy, so as to overwhelm him as quick as possible, was the summary of Nelson's tactics. He knew that complicated evolutions are liable to accidents which often produce the contrary effect to that which is desired. Moreover, English ships being better worked than French or Spanish ones, and having gunners accustomed to fighting the guns on both sides, could not but be gainers in a *mêlée*. Every circumstance, therefore, calculated to create confusion, was, in Nelson's eyes, a new chance of success for the English fleet; and he would, no doubt, have considered a gale of wind or a dark night as equal to a reinforcement of two or three ships. — *James's Naval History.*

if we can only oppose him with a new order of battle, instead of with better squadrons. The last war presents subjects more worthy of our study than tactics. The English did not owe their triumphs to the number of their ships, to the greatness of their maritime population, to administrative wisdom, nor the wise combinations of the Admiralty. The English beat us because their crews were better trained, and their squadrons better disciplined than ours. That superiority was the fruit of some years' cruising, and was the work of Jervis and of Nelson. It is the secret mechanism of that silent and gradual work which we must investigate, for we must study Nelson organizing his fleet ere we can understand him fighting with such successful rashness: we must examine the means before we can comprehend the end.

What was Nelson before the battle of the Nile? The favourite scholar, the associate of Jervis, the enthusiastic admirer of the *Great Earl*, who first introduced into the British navy that firm discipline, that regulated zeal, which we may envy even in the present day. Nelson learned from Jervis at that time "to preserve his crews in health without going into port, to keep his ships at sea for years, and to prefer the exercise of the great guns and practical seamanship before

any *frippery* and *gimcrack*." The happy temperament with which nature had endowed him proved of farther advantage, and he transformed a disciplined force into "a band of brothers." Nelson and Collingwood alone possessed that science of command, energetic without harshness, persuasive without feebleness, which owes far more to prestige than authority. The idol of his seamen, he possessed in an equal degree the affection, more difficult to attain, of his officers. But he was not satisfied that such sentiment should be felt merely for his own person. He wished (a wise and great policy) that mutual esteem and devotion should pervade the whole fleet, and influence men destined to combat together. In the Bay of Naples, on the shores of the Baltic, before Toulon as before Cadiz, in the midst of the most pressing occupations and important events, he could find time to interpose in the slightest quarrels, and prevent the animosity ready to break out. It is, above all, upon seeing this illustrious man condescend to this task of conciliation, and stoop to these humble offices, that we can best comprehend the salutary influence which a beloved chief can exercise over those he commands. Far from entrenching himself from a mistaken idea of dignity in inaccessible forms, Nelson, on the contrary, mixed himself up with the daily life of all on board, becoming

its very centre, and, winning all hearts and wills to himself, directed them to one object,—the annihilation of our fleets.

That, moreover, which ensured to Nelson a ready devotion, and zealous concurrence on the part of his officers, was the *naïve* simplicity of his orders and the clearness of his instructions—"I am always ready," he often said, "to lose half my own fleet to ensure the destruction of the French. Impressed with this idea, there is no instance of his blaming an unfortunate officer, or failing to take his part. A zealous captain in his eyes was never wrong. If he lost his ship he deserved to have another,—"I am not one of those people," he wrote to the rigorous Admiralty upon such an occasion, "who are afraid of the shore: those who are afraid to approach the coast will seldom perform any great action, especially in a small ship. We may console ourselves for the loss of a vessel; but the loss of a brave officer's services, in my opinion, would be a national loss; and allow me to say, if I myself had been censured each time I hazarded my ship or my fleet, I should long since have been out of the navy, instead of being in the House of Lords." It was by such means that Nelson formed captains who could second his daring; he taught them by his example, his lessons, and his zealous sympathy for undeserved

misfortune, to consider the preservation of a ship a secondary object, the execution of orders the principal end. He succeeded in inspiring others (which was his grand aim) with that valuable confidence which animated himself when, before Genoa in 1795, he gave this conclusive answer to General Beaulieu, "Do not fear for my squadron; if it is lost, our admiral will take care to supply another."

In the midst of the tempest of war, governments are more willing to submit to such sacrifices, but in more regular times they are irritated by them. We must, however, expect and allow for some inevitable accidents, if we desire to form an active navy, which, in more urgent circumstances, shall not have to contend with the over caution and timidity which too strict a system of responsibility teaches officers.* The

* Much has been said in France about the loss of some ships of war, when we should rather be astonished at their small number, considering the delicate and intricate navigation in which they are employed. The Baron Tupinier remarks that the insurance on French merchant ships equals 10 per cent. per annum; and though the royal navy incurs greater risks than the commercial, the annual per centage of losses, or, in other words, the value of insurance, amounts to only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the value of ships in commission. Thus the ability and carefulness of our officers has reduced the risk by three quarters. We may here remark that others would be less censorious if the first declamations against inevitable accidents did not proceed from naval officers themselves. Those who are wanting in generosity to unfortunate brother officers, should remember the words of the unhappy Villeneuve, — "The *sailors* of Paris and the departments will be very unworthy

things which Nelson attempted with his ships during his remarkable career, the risks and perils to which he exposed them in his adventurous Odyssey, will strike every seaman with astonishment. Not to speak of Aboukir Bay, into which he led his squadron at sunset, with no other guide than a wretched sketch found in a French merchant ship; without recalling his perilous expedition in the Baltic; where is there an officer who will not admire his last cruise in the Mediterranean, wherein he conducted his fleet, and that old Victory, accustomed to more careful treatment, through unknown passages, which, even in the present day, appear impracticable for such ships? There were no difficulties of navigation which, in such a school, the English did not learn to surmount. Such is, in part, the secret of those persevering cruises which, even in the depth of winter, kept our ports blockaded, and our shores alarmed. Such is the best explanation of those rapid movements which disconcerted our projects, those unforeseen concentrations by which the English squadrons seemed to be multiplied over the face of the globe.

That which we may most profitably study in Nelson, that man of such prodigious energy, as well as such uncommon valour, is still more his

and unwise if they throw stones at me, which will, sooner or later, fall back upon their own heads."

nautical activity than his military daring. "It is by taking this view that we recognise all the importance of that collection (Nelson's despatches) which has served as the basis of our work. That monument which has been raised with religious care to the hero of England is also an historical monument. These semi-official despatches, these unstudied effusions, affording unquestionable proofs of the ardent love of the service, the professional enthusiasm which distinguished Nelson above all his rivals, transport us into the heart of the enemy's camp, and enable us at this day to enter the tent of Achilles. For our own part we rejoice to say we return from this excursion more tranquillised as to the future, more assured, even by our reverses during the last war, since they neither arose from the character of our population, nor from the nature of things, but from the temporary inferiority which circumstances had imposed upon us.* We have also

* An officer of the English navy has already expressed our ideas on this subject; and we cannot resist the pleasure of extracting a passage from his work. "Suppose a French naval officer (says Captain Plunkett, after giving a brief and correct sketch of the successes which have done credit to our navy since 1830), suppose a French officer, not a disciple of the *Siècle*, or a foolish brawler against England, but a candid, liberal-minded man to express himself thus—'You beat us last war very decidedly; but while we do not deny our past defeats, neither are we discouraged by them; on the contrary, in the midst of our most fatal reverses, we recognise traits of heroism and fortitude, which console us for the past, and give us hopes for the future. Englishmen have never

arrived at this matured conviction, that the distant action of a central power can but imper-

doubted our courage; but, with the blindness with which national character is often estimated, they have supposed French courage, though fiery and impetuous, to be wanting in endurance. Yet there is no fact more incontestably established than the fortitude shown by French officers and seamen when overmatched in skill or numbers. Your own official returns and the despatches of your commanders, when victorious, will show that the resistance of French ships was often prolonged beyond the bounds of duty, and to the verge of desperation. The captors often took possession of a slaughter-house rather than a ship of war. On the other hand, the causes of our defeats, which are palpable, and not to be mistaken, are not of a permanent nature, nor innate in Frenchmen, as we flatter ourselves are our courage and endurance. The most cursory glance of an impartial naval history, and perhaps your countrymen have been the fairest (it is easier for the successful party to be so), will show that it was the superior efficiency of your fire which subdued our ships. While your gunners were clearing our quarters, we were shooting away your 'royal yards,' or wasting our fire on the clouds. Not that your gunnery was good (the art was then unknown at sea), but that ours was detestable. Yet as men are not born gunners, we do not despair of training our seamen to a high degree of perfection before the next war; and, depend upon it, we shall spare neither expense nor pains in doing so. In seamanship, also, you had a great advantage over us; and here, again, we console ourselves by thinking that seamanship is not *innate*, but *acquired*. We now maintain as many seamen in the royal navy in peace as you do, and of late years they have had more practice against an enemy. In *matériel* your superiority is incontestable; yet that by no means precludes the weaker party from achieving victories, as your last war with America sufficiently proved. The Americans had not a twentieth of your force, but, by opposing heavier and better manned ships to you, they tore many laurels from your brow. . . . *Au reste* to you belongs the *prestige* of past success, to us the teaching of adversity. We have learnt in the least pleasing, but we trust the most instructive, school. You may smile at our confidence, because it is new born; yet it is for that reason less likely to deceive us. We build upon what *is*, not upon what *was*, and we are safe from the danger which has proved fatal to

fectly supply the place of an immediate and ever present controul. It is that *administrative* authority, however able and zealous it may be, cannot supply the place of that *military* authority, the motive power which can only be advantageously exercised by the commander-in-chief of a fleet. Whenever a strong and provident government shall invest its agents with a little more confidence and influence, delegating to them, as it were, its own authority; whenever the commanders-in-chief at home or abroad are allowed to confer with their own hands the rewards due for good and faithful service *, then shall we find chiefs ready to do for our navy that which Jervis and Nelson did for the British. Then, we feel pleasure in thinking, the wish of the unfortunate Comte de Grasse will be fulfilled, and "the ancient attachment of French seamen to their chiefs will revive."

many nations — a reliance upon successes achieved in a state of things which has passed away. Spain still retains the pillars of Hercules on her coin, but upon Gibraltar your flag has long been waving.'"

* "It must be to the Admiral," wrote Earl St. Vincent to Nelson, "that officers look for advancement; without that they would set no value upon the opinion of their chiefs."

THE END.

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